

Rockets end season as Regional Champs

BY TARA COX

On the day after Thanksgiving most people are usually in one of two places: at home visiting with family, or crowding the malls on the busiest shopping day of the year. This was not the case in Rockcastle County.

A record 4,000+ fans piled into the bleachers at Rockcastle County Middle School on November 24 for the state AAA semi-finals game, where the Rockcastle Rockets experienced their first loss of the season to the Fort Thomas Highlands Bluebirds, 41-9.

It is a game that has been defined as "the most emotional game of Rocket football history."

"I was happy with the way we played. I knew it was going to be a big task in trying to win the game but the kids played as hard as they could. They [Highlands] were just the superior team," Head Coach Tom Larkey stated.

The loss, however devastating, was one that every team member can take pride in. The team showed their presence to the state champion football team, who also ranks seventh in the nation.

Highlands monopolized the

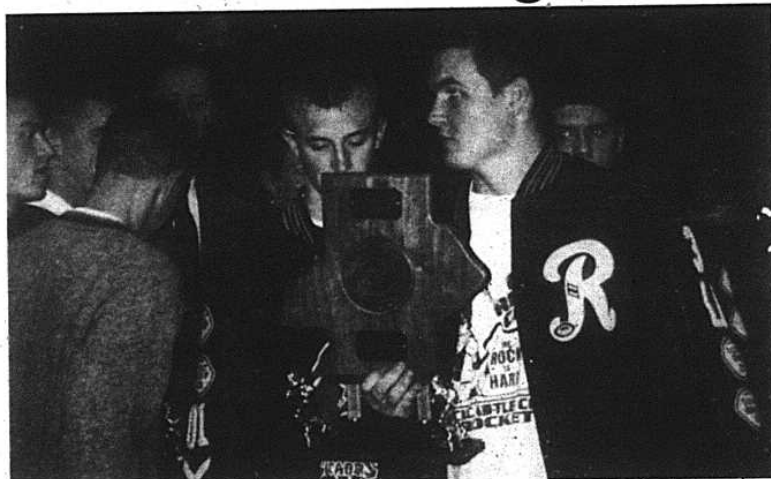


photo by Mindy Bullock

Senior Travis Ingram holds the football team's regional trophy at a pep rally last week. The team presented the trophy to Superintendent Larry Hammond and Principal Ruth Allen.

game from the time it began. By half-time, several people believed that all hope was lost for Rockcastle, but moments before half-time, senior fullback Sean Smith scored two points on a safety. This restored the hope of a Rock comeback for hundreds of fans.

After the half, sophomore tailback Marty Reagan completed a touchdown, and senior place kicker Greg Terry kicked for the extra point.

Until Highlands faced Rockcastle, quarterback Gino Guidugli had not been sacked all season.

Sean Smith succeeded in doing this not once, but twice.

Seniors may have lost their last chance at receiving a championship ring, but the legacy they have made will carry on longer than any ring they may wear.

This season was one full of bro-

ken records and newly-held titles. No other Rocket football team has advanced as far as state semi-finals, nor has any team gained the title of regional champions.

Head Coach Tom Larkey received the Associated Press' award for "Coach of the Year" in Kentucky.

Senior Derrick Bussell was selected for first-team all-state as a defensive back. He is the first RCHS football player to be named to first-team.

In another first, Rockcastle defeated the Bell County Bobcats. That game was one of six shutouts in the regular season, and also finished a perfect season, 10-0.

RCHS football had the number one ranked scoring and rushing defense in the state, and second for largest scoring margin in the state. Rockcastle had the third ranked scoring offense.

"When we went to football camp at the end of summer and at practice, I didn't really expect the season that we had," said Coach Larkey. "We were hoping to win six or seven games maybe get runner-up in the district."

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