Football improves to 2-0 with win at Towson

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Junior quarterback Brian Hall led Holy Cross into Towson’s Minnegan Stadium where he resumed his aerial assault on the Tigers, passing for 197 yards and two touchdowns. Hall was not the only one that took center stage on Saturday, however. The story of the day was once again the stingy Crusader defense who has given up a scant 16 points total in their opening two games. The front four led the charge back Michael Blake, junior linebacker Dave Dugan, and senior defensive end Sammy Saki. “Our defense really ran circles around Blake and (Vernell) Shaw,” said Dugan. “They are our stars and our leaders.” It was the defense that drew first blood in the first quarter. With Towson pinned down behind their own five-yard line, Tiger running back Noah Read tried to storm up field when Dugan took his attempt in the Towson endzone forcing the safety.Read entered the match up third in rushing on the year. Earlier versus Lafayette, Read racked up 218 yards becoming the 13th player in Towson history to break the 200 yard pinnacle. Read would have been better off staying at home on Saturday as the defense limited him to a two-year low 49 yards rushing on 19 carries. It was the third time in 15 games Read hadn’t broken the century mark.

Dugan’s two points were the only tallies on the board for either team after the first quarter. At 11:54 of the second, Towson kicker Ed Kulic booted home a 29 yard field goal to cap off a six play, 18 yard drive that brought them down to the Crusader one yard line; however, it would be the Tigers’ last lead of the game. With the conclusion of the half looming, Hall connected with senior wide receiver Steve Green off a 41 yard pass. Green broke two tackles before dancing into the end zone to give Holy Cross a lead they would not relinquish. Senior Dave Thompson tacked on two more points after grabbing a pass from Hall to complete the conversion. The HC defense remained air tight and took their team into the locker room at halftime with a 10-3 lead.

The second half began just as the first ended. On their first possession, Hall marched his offense down the field 80 yards on a mere six plays. He scaled the Tiger’s fate with his second TD pass of the day, finding Thompson once again. While Hall closed the door on Towson, the defense bolted it shut. Siacki in particular made life miserable for Tiger quarterbacks Val Troiani and Jay Amer. Both suffered a combined five sacks, two at the hands of Siacki, who drilled them into the turf for a combined loss of 15 yards. After containing the threat on the ground, Towson altered its plan of going to Read by mounting an aerial front. Troiani went 14-29 on the day for 255 yards while his counterpart Amer was 6-11 and only threw for 77 yards. Their favorite receiver was Justin Mattera, who hauled in 121 yards receiving. The attack from the air didn’t hold up throughout. In addition Amer were each forced into one interception a piece, accounting for two of the five turnovers Towson committed over the course of the day.

Holy Cross kept the leg of Kulic busy in the second half. Despite penetrating deep into the Towson redzone five times during the course of the day, Troiani was never able to lead his squad into the endzone. The Tiger’s were plagued by turnovers after reaching first and goal on two occasions. Kulic was called upon in the squandered occasions that the Towson offense could not take advantage of. The Tiger’s nine points were all a result of the kicker, who hit from 19 and 26 yards out in the final half.

Blake captained the defense as he turned in 11 tackles on the day to complement an interception on the HC one yard line to kill one of Towson’s five first-and-goal attempts. There is an unstoppable zone of focus that some players are fortunate enough to enter into during their careers, rendering them unstoppable. For Dave Dugan, Saturday was that day. The 6’2” 220 pound junior from Washington D.C. was named the Patriot League Defensive Player of the Week for his meeting. If you cannot make it to WCHC 88.1 FM. Welcome Back Mike, Our Country Needs You.

It happened this week. Michael Jordan announced he is coming back to the NBA to play for the Wizards. But so many of us have the same question - why? And I have heard so many people try to explain Jordan’s latest return, but I think they are just making everything too complicated. They say he is returning because of his ego. They say he is returning because he failed at being a front-office executive. They say he is returning because the full-time family man stint was not as much fun as he originally thought. I think the real answer is simple: he loves playing basketball. End of story.

Jordan was the best athlete to ever play the game. And even at age 38, he will be still one of the best. I will even say that he is going to lead the Wizards to a playoff spot in the East, averaging over twenty points a game. A stretch? Maybe. But if anyone can turn the Wizards around, it is Jordan.

For those of you who think Jordan’s return is a bad move, think again. Can’t basketball fans simply enjoy his comeback, the way hockey fans enjoyed last year’s comeback of Mario Lemieux? The state of the NBA is such where it could use a little magic. The lukewarm potential for a heated play-off race in the Eastern Conference will not be enough to hold fan interest for very long.

Sports are filled with so many horrible stories. An example - the life story of Carl Everett. So why, then, do we have such a hard time celebrating the good ones? Why are people complaining about the return of the game’s greatest player? If Jordan is not afraid of returning as a lesser talent, than we should applaud his willingness to risk failure on the national stage. So many people play it safe, but Jordan is willing to match his game with the young guys now.

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The National Basketball Association needs Jordan. The NBA is not fine without him. So many of the younger guys are playing for the paychecks, not the championships. Jordan’s salary: you may already know, is being donated to the relief efforts for the September 11 tragedies. Jordan is, in some senses, everything we admire about our country. He is a winner. He is dominating. He is the best in the world at what he does. He plays fair. He is a good guy with good values. In other words, he is the kind of American man that we want to represent us all over the world.

So Jordan is coming back simply because he loves the game, and there is something wonderful about hearing that. He loves basketball. Period. In a world that recently became a lot more complicated, this kind of simplicity is refreshing. It really doesn’t matter if Jordan is still the best. Being the best is not what his return is about. It is about a sports hero continuing to give us hope as he continues to follow his dream. It is about hearing some good news. And that is what Jordan gave us this week. Good news is something all of us in this country need right now.

We are at a time in history when we are reminded over and over that tomorrow is not guaranteed, therefore we cannot look to find faults in a man who wants to pursue his greatest joy in life. Welcome back Michael.