Long-Range “Rock” Strafes Shepherd


Slippery Rock came to Shepherdstown with an unbeaten record to meet the one-win Rams.

And with its complete group of starters continually firing away from three-point distance, The Rock eventually overcame a six-point halftime deficit to prevail, 87-84.

Slippery Rock fired off no fewer than 42 three-point attempts and registered 45 of its points when it had 15 successes.

With all five starters scoring in double figures, The Rock was able to overcome the 35-point performance by Shepherd guard Tyrone Roach and two others in double figures for the Rams, now 1-6 overall.

Slippery Rock improved to 8-0 and placed Jabril Bailey (23 points), Marlon Brown (22 points), Mike Evans (15 points), Cecil Brown (12 points), and Maurice Douglas (12 points) in twin figures. All five of Slippery Rock’s starters attempted at least four long-range shots.

The Slippery Rock bench accounted for only five points and only one player logged more than 10 minutes.

Roach had 19 points by halftime as Shepherd went out to a 41-35 lead. Dave Karlson (12 points, eight rebounds) and Chad Moore (12 points, 10 rebounds) were Shepherd’s other two players scoring in double figures.

Derek Gallagher had 10 rebounds for the Rams as they outrebounded The Rock, 48-42. Aaron Spencer added eight points and a game-high five assists.

Shepherd shot 39.5 percent from the field in achieving its first-half lead... and then warmed up to shoot 45.7 percent in the second half... but could not stop Slippery Rock’s scorers from posting some 52 second-half points. Slippery Rock made 54.5 percent of its second-half field goal tries.

After falling behind in the second half, the Rams pulled to within 84-82 on a Roach three-pointer with just 27 seconds remaining. Slippery Rock then made three of! final four free throws to ward off the Rams.

Shepherd will not play again until January 7, 2010 when it faces conference rival Charleston at about 8 p.m. at its Butcher Center.
Former Ram inks NFL contract

By TONY GROVE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

Former Shepherd University football player Ricky Schmitt has been spending time in Salem, Va., working as a substitute teacher while continuing to keep in shape by kicking at his alma mater, Salem High School.

But funds were beginning to get a bit tight for the Ram career field goal and kick scoring record-holder.

That is until Wednesday when Schmitt got an early Christmas present.

With San Francisco kicker Joe Nedney out after pulling a hamstring against Philadelphia last weekend, the 49ers signed the 24-year-old Schmitt to a one-year league-minimum $310,000 contract.

“I had $11 in my bank account before I got out here,” Schmitt said.

“I substitute teach sometimes, but I wanted this bad, so I stayed home and trained.”

Sunday will mark the first time Schmitt will get to kick in a regular-season game in his five attempts with professional teams. He is guaranteed a single-day paycheck of $18,000.

And a good bit of thanks for that can be attributed to his fiancée, Jennifer Gentle, as she has been the one holding and shagging balls for Schmitt while he worked out at Salem.

“She always held the laces just right,” Schmitt told Mercurynews.com’s Daniel Brown.

Quite a feat, considering Schmitt is a lefty, just like Nedney. It also means that 49ers holder Andy Lee won’t have to adjust his placement just days before a game.

Schmitt, who made his first appearance in San Francisco in 2008, began his NFL career as an unsigned free agent in Arizona. He punted just three times in two preseason contests, but was released on Aug. 27, 2007.

The following January, Schmitt signed with San Francisco and led the team in punting yard average, 43.7 on three punts. He also went 3 for 4 in field goal attempts and 5 for 5 on PATs. After a two-touchback, two tackle performance against the Bears on Aug. 21, he was waived in the final round of cuts on the 30th.

From there, he made a three-day stay on Pittsburgh’s practice squad that ended on Nov. 1 before signing with Oakland Dec. 15, 2009. He was again waived during final cuts this September.

“I was starting to get a little doubt in my mind,” Schmitt told Brown.

“But I always held out hope. And I got the call and all that went out the door.”

In the 2009 preseason, Schmitt punted 18 times for a 40.5 average and was perfect as a kicker on extra points going 6 for 6.

Now, Schmitt returns to San Francisco to face the Detroit Lions in a game that is a must-win if San Francisco wishes to end the season at .500.

“I can’t wait,” Schmitt said. “I always held out hope. It’s good to be back here in San Francisco.”

Schmitt graduated from Salem High in 2003, but did not play football until his senior year. A four-year varsity letterman in soccer, he originally went out for football because the San Devils’ need for a kicker.

Schmitt was offered a scholarship to play soccer for Virginia Tech, but chose to join the Shepherd Rams.

In 2006, he would have been among the leaders of all divisions in punting statistics, however, his 41 punts were not enough to qualify. He is a three-time first-team All-West Virginia Conference selection as a punter and a two-time first-team selection as a kicker, 2006 Daktronics Division II first-team All-Northest Region selection and a second-team All-American in 2006.

Schmitt holds virtually all Shepherd kicking records including:

- All-time leader in career kickoff scoring (250 points)
- All-time leader in career field goals (33)
- Most extra points in a career (151)
Ex-Ram off to hot NFL start

Schmitt kicks pair of field goals, extra points during 49ers win against Detroit

BY TONY GROVE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO — Former Shepherd University kicker Ricky Schmitt’s NFL debut wasn’t perfect, but it was awful close.

After signing with the San Francisco 49ers earlier in the week, the former kicking standout from Shepherd University made the best of his first regular-season game on Sunday, going 2 of 3 on field goal attempts and 2 for 2 on PATs in the 49ers’ 20-6 win over the Detroit Lions.

“It was great, I can’t thank God enough,” Schmitt said. “I was actually more excited than nervous. The snaps by Bryan Jennings were great, the holds perfect by Andy Lee, and I had one of the best kickers, (Joe) Nedney, on the sideline. All-in-all, it was a great night.”

The only blemish to Schmitt’s day came when Detroit defensive tackle Grady Jackson blocked a field goal attempt from 28-yards with 10 seconds remaining in the first half.

“I made that third field goal and they ended up calling a timeout to ice me,” Schmitt said. “I guess Detroit had a great rush scheme, even (Nedney) told me he couldn’t have gotten that one off.”

He then booted the kickoff into the end zone for his first NFL touchback.

Schmitt added his final point on a PAT on the next San Francisco series after a 1-yard touchdown run by Frank Gore.

“It was exciting. The last home game of the season,” Schmitt said. “As far as I know, I’ll be here for St. Louis too for the last game of the season.”

With the performance Schmitt knows he is headed in the right direction saying, “I’m getting some more experience, showing teams I can be a punter and a kicker.”

Schmitt, who had just $11 in his bank account before signing with the 49ers, solidified his case for a roster spot on any NFL team looking to resolve kicking woes with the one-game performance.

“My celebration was getting in the ice tub and getting ready for next week,” Schmitt said. “Enjoy this win and tomorrow is a new day to start getting ready for St. Louis.”

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Ram teams fall at UC

CHARLESTON — Jonathan Higgins scored 23 points to lead Charleston to a 93-85 win over Shepherd in West Virginia Conference men’s basketball on Thursday night.

Charleston (5-3, 4-0) got 19 points and 10 assists from Bahaaadir Russel, James Eversley added 13 points, while John White had 12 points and a team-high 13 rebounds.

Tyrone Rouch and Dave Karlson led the Rams (2-7, 1-3) with 17 points each as all five Ram starters hit in double figures. Jonathan Motichka had 16 points in his season debut with 12 coming from 3-point range.

Derek Gallagher contributed 15 points, five assists, four rebounds and three steals, while freshman Chad Moore had 13 points and a game-high 14 rebounds.

WOMEN’S COLLEGE HOOPS
Charleston 78, Shepherd 68

CHARLESTON — Kaitlyn Arick scored 25 points and Lindsey Kentner added 24 to lead Charleston to a win over Shepherd in West Virginia Conference women’s basketball.

Arick connected on 10 of 17 field goals with a 2-for-4 effort from 3-point range. Kentner was 9 of 15 from the floor with a 6-of-10 effort from beyond the arc.

Charleston (7-4, 4-2) also got 15 points and a game-high 16 rebounds from Tareena Dixon.

Shelby Fayak led the Rams with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Jerica Hewett added 14 points, a game-high seven assists and five rebounds, while Camille Wilmer also tossed in 14 points. Carrie Saunders added 12 points, while Jenn Prine contributed eight points and nine rebounds.

Charleston shot 43.2 percent (32 of 74) from the floor, while Shepherd connected on 38.2 percent (26 of 68). UC had a 49-39 rebounding advantage.

Shepherd (3-5, 2-2) trailed by only two points at 70-68 with 2:48 remaining in the game after a layup by Wilmer, but the Golden Eagles put the game away with an 8-0 run — fueled by five points from Arick.