

Cut Me, Mick

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

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There are not a lot of people, either in Mt. Pleasant, Mich. or in Muncie, Ind. that expected what happened in Saturday's Ball State road contest with Central Michigan to come to fruition. CMU was considered to be among the premiere programs in the conference and had the resume to back up that lofty assessment.

Though the Chips were 2-2 coming in, both their losses were on the road to solid programs...a 30-25 loss to Northwestern out of the Big Ten and a nationally televised 13-10 loss to Temple in Philadelphia.

Ball State, on the other hand, stood at 1-3 with an embarrassing 27-23 home loss to Liberty followed by an 11-point loss at Purdue and a 45-0 pasting at the hands of Iowa.

Ball State marching into Mt. Pleasant and walking out with a 31-17 victory was more than unexpected...it seemed to defy logic.

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But, as nearly every coach in history has stated, that is why they play the games.

CMU helped Ball State in ensuring its own destruction. The Chippewas failed to take care of the ball, throwing three interceptions and surrendering a fumble. CMU also did not protect the quarterback, allowing the Cardinals to sack quarterback Ryan Radcliffe six times. Right tackle Rocky Weaver was abused by Ball State defensive end Robert Edding, a second-team all-conference performer last season. Edding ended up with four and a half sacks. Unlike the fictional Rocky, who got his redemption in the end, this Rocky had no sage advice from his corner man to bail him out. He was simply out-classed.

You would think, after such an impressive win, Ball State head coach Stan Parrish would leave well enough alone. Why poke the bear you just whipped, right?

“The defensive line was not playing Purdue and Iowa today,” Parrish said. “No disrespect to Central, but they weren’t.”

I love how people can say something disrespectful, throw a “no disrespect to...” out there and think any disrespect felt should be wiped out. It’s kind of like saying “those pants make you look fat, no offense” to your wife or girlfriend and not expect to sleep on the couch that night.

It’s a pretty good bet that CMU coach Dan Enos will put that quote to good use, reminding his offensive line that they are not Purdue or Iowa all year. And before the Ball State game next season.

Central Michigan played poorly, but you have to hand it to Ball State...they took advantage of the Chippewa mistakes. The Cardinals also moved the football at will on the ground, rushing for over 300 yards, and played disciplined football, committing just four penalties.

The Cardinals defense also controlled CMU. All you have to do is look at the drive chart to see how thoroughly dominated the Chippewas offense was. Their first 11 drives went as follows: six plays – punt; six plays – punt; 10 plays – field goal; three-and-out; three-and-out; three-and-out; fumbled punt return; four plays – punt; four plays – punt; seven plays – punt; one play –

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interception.

Tough to win football games that way.

In the coming weeks we will see if this game was an aberration, or if Central Michigan is down a bit this season. Or is Ball State better than people may have thought? We will not have to wait very long to find out. Ball State hosts Western Michigan Saturday, a game the Cardinals should be expected to win. Central Michigan must travel to Blacksburg to play at Virginia Tech. The Hokies lost at home to James Madison earlier this season, so it is not inconceivable the Chippewas could keep things very competitive.

Then again, it isn't like Virginia Tech will be facing Purdue or Northwestern. No disrespect to Central.