

George Diamantis



GEORGE DIAMANTIS cemented his place in Norwalk football history on a cool and crisp Friday night 40 years ago this fall.

It was on that November 8, 1985 night that the Central Catholic running back had the greatest single-game offensive performance ever by a local high school football player when he scored a state record 48 points in the Cavaliers' 50-12 rout over Brookfield on the Bobcats' home turf.

All George Diamantis did that night was score seven touchdowns, run in a two-point conversion and kick four extra points to give him a total of 48 points. That not only set a new city of Norwalk record, but it also eclipsed the previous state record of 44 points set in 1974.

And while George's seven TDs — on runs of 3, 1, 17, 25, 20, 65, and 36 yards — tied a state record, it was his six conversion points that put him over the top and all alone in the state record book. But that was only part of his great night. The 5-foot-11, 185-pound back, who combined his natural speed with his strength, would carry the ball 39 times for 284 yards, another new Central Catholic record.

While that record-setting game was undoubtedly George's best effort in a CCHS uniform, he certainly had several other standout games. In fact, he rushed for over 100 yards in nine of the Cavaliers' 11 games that season, including over 200 three times. The only two games he didn't reach the century mark he had 90 and 77 yards. In other words, no team ever stopped him cold.

In Central's fourth game against Weston, George ran the ball an amazing 45 times and gained 266 yards, which at the time set a new team record. That record lasted four weeks before he broke it with his one-man show against Brookfield. And one week after his 284-yard effort, he ran for another 271 yards and three touchdowns against Bullard Havens.

He also had games of 199, 179, 163, 162, 147, and 119 yards on the ground. That 199-yard effort came in the final game of the season on Thanksgiving morning against rival St. Mary's of Greenwich. Diamantis came into the season finale with 1,807 yards rushing and needed a 193-yard game to reach the coveted 2,000-yard mark. He was at 1,980 yards as the final minute ticked away, but on what would be the final play of the game and the season, George got the ball for the 36th time and rambled 26 yards to the end zone to provide a dramatic finish to his fabulous season.

That gave him a city-record 2,006 yards rushing for the season, while the touchdown, his third of the game, gave him 23 for the season and another city record. He also kicked one PAT to account for all the scoring in the Cavaliers' 19-0 win. That gave him 151 points for the season, yet another city record, as were his 205 career points.

And in a touch of irony, George also won the city scoring title as a junior with 48 points — the same number of points he would score in one single game a year later.

His postseason accolades included being named All-Western Connecticut Conference, All-State, and All-City co-MVP.

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While Diamantis dominated on offense, he also shined on defense for Central Catholic. So much so that when he enrolled at Graceland College in Des Moines, Iowa, he was used strictly on the defensive side of the ball as a defensive back and became one of the best in the Heart of America Conference. In fact, he was named All-Conference and All-District three straight seasons, while earning All-America Honorable Mention as

a junior and second team All-America his senior year.

Longtime former Graceland football coach Bill 'Duke' Dudek, when recently asked about Diamantis, called him "one of the greatest defensive backs in Graceland history. We could put him at free safety, we could put him at cornerback, and he also returned kickoffs and punts. He was one of the best players I ever coached." ■