



ROSE RAYMOND PHOTO

Sophomore wide receiver Riley Selvais dives to pull in a 25-yard touchdown catch in the first quarter of Saturday's win over Catholic Memorial. Selvais finished with nine catches for 129 yards and two scores.

St. Pierre wins 100th game as unbeaten Prep football takes it to CM

By Phil Stacey
» Executive Sports Editor

DANVERS — After every St. John's Prep football win where he isn't sacked, nationally recruited five-star sophomore SJP43
CM28

quarterback Chris Vargas is happy to get milkshakes for his offensive linemen. "A few guys like chocolate, a few strawberry, and one vanilla. I think (senior captain) Joe Irzyk likes the vanilla," Vargas chuckled.

With Vargas steering the ship, the Prep

offense is *anything* but vanilla. That was once again on display on a brilliant fall afternoon Saturday at Glatz Field, where Vargas threw for 269 yards and four touchdown passes — two of those to his fellow sophomore superstar, wideout Riley Selvais — as the unbeaten Eagles took down their rivals from Catholic Memorial, 43-28, on Homecoming.

Earning head coach Brian St. Pierre his 100th career victory on the Prep sidelines, the state's top ranked team

SEE PREP, PAGE 10



ROSE RAYMOND PHOTOS

Tight end Brody Gillingham (right) leaps in the air to celebrate his 38-yard touchdown reception alongside wide receiver Ethan Stefanovich Saturday against Catholic Memorial.

» **Prep**

Continued from Page 9

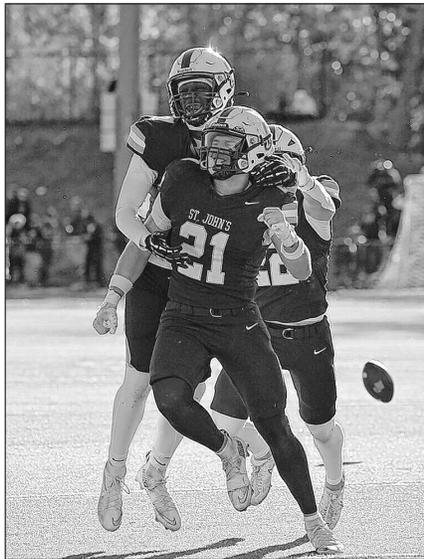
scored 28 unanswered points to turn a 14-point deficit early in the second quarter into a commanding lead that they never surrendered.

“We had a chip on our shoulders,” said Vargas, referring to last season’s 34-0 loss at Catholic Memorial. “We took this game personally.”

“We just did what we always do: came out and executed our offense,” said Selvais, who grabbed nine of Vargas’ passes for 129 yards, including touchdown receptions of 25 and 9 yards. “All the offseason work we do and time we spend working in practice prepares us for games like this.”

Now 8-0, St. John’s Prep has scored 352 points while allowing just 144 against arguably the state’s toughest schedule. That’s an average of 44 points per game and just 18 allowed.

St. Pierre, who said he was so focused on preparing for Catholic Memorial (now 6-2) that he was unaware of his impending 100th career win, was praiseworthy of his players for beating a talent-heavy Knights squad. He was especially proud of how they responded after trailing 20-6 early and how they fought back, took the lead and



St. John’s Prep captain Alex Turrisi celebrates after his fourth quarter interception all but sealed Saturday’s 43-28 win over Catholic Memorial.

kept the pedal to the proverbial metal.

Maxwell Parent got it started with a 6-yard scoring run out of the Wildcat in which he broke out of two tackles en route to the end zone, making it 20-14 with 3:29 left until halftime. The ensuing kick was a pop up along the right sidelines that the Eagles recovered on the CM 17, and three plays later Vargas hit Selvais from nine yards out. A Parent halfback pass to tight end Anthony Sanderson gave the hosts the lead for good at 22-20.

“They’re spectacular players,” St. Pierre said of Vargas and Selvais. “They just have an unbelievable feel for the

game.”

“When I see that ball, my mind just says ‘Go get it,’” said Selvais, who made a diving reception in the end zone for his first quarter touchdown. “I’ve got to come down with it.”

But that wasn’t all. Three plays later Jordan Toribio recovered a Knights’ fumble at their 38-yard line, and on the next play tight end Brody Gillingham got loose on a play action fake and was wide open, eagerly snapping up Vargas’ perfect throw in stride. Liam Cullen’s kick made it 29-20 at the break.

“Our guys don’t waver,” said St. Pierre, whose club finished with a slight edge in



St. John’s Prep head coach Brian St. Pierre poses with his three sons after coaching the Eagles to his 100th career win Saturday, a 43-28 triumph over Catholic Memorial.

total offense (375-345). “Belief is probably the biggest part of what we’re doing right now. They believe in what we do and how hard they work and what we ask of them.

“It was a culture win; we have a very strong culture here and we work at it,” he continued. “We’re not flashy ... our guys just grind.”

Getting the kickoff to start the second half, St. John’s Prep slowed it down and went 72 yards in a dozen plays, eating up 7 minutes and 22 seconds before Sanderson caught a 5-yard flare pass from Vargas for the score.

Irzyk, the right guard and lone offensive lineman with any starting experience (4 games) coming into the season, again led his unit against a physical imposing Catholic Memorial defense. Fellow seniors Gio Correa at left tackle and Luke Mailhot at center, plus junior left guard Will Seaha and sophomore right tackle Will Figulski, helped the Eagles control the football for 33 minutes and 52 seconds of the game’s 48-minute duration.

St. Pierre praised their position coach, Steve Haberek, for

the work he’s done in building this offensive line from virtual scratch.

Toribio and Parent combined for 106 hard-earned yards on the ground, with Parent adding a 6-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.

Although he didn’t land on the scoresheet, senior captain Pierson Scala made the play of the day for St. John’s Prep by stretching out with one hand and snaring a back shoulder pass from Vargas in the fourth quarter, good for 32 yards.

“That catch was insane,” admitted Vargas. “His back was to me when he caught it!”

With Catholic Memorial desperately trying to fight its way back, quarterback Kise Flannery (189 yards passing, 55 yards rushing, 2 TDs) was picked off by the Prep’s best defensive player, captain Alex Turrisi, with 4:19 to go and the hosts ran out the clock from there.

“We’re an imperfect group,” said St. Pierre, “but we’re uniquely comfortable with it and know how to overcome it. And we’re resilient.”

Contact Phil Stacey @PhilStacey_SN