

November 9, 2007

Saturday showdown

Rock needs win to keep playoff hopes alive

By Brandon Fox
Rocket Sports Editor

Must-win. That is what Saturday's game at Edinboro amounts to for the Rock.

A must-win.

Coming off last Thursday's 27-11 victory over Lock Haven, the Rock expected to either remain in the seventh spot in the latest NCAA Division II Northeast Region rankings or move a spot or two higher.

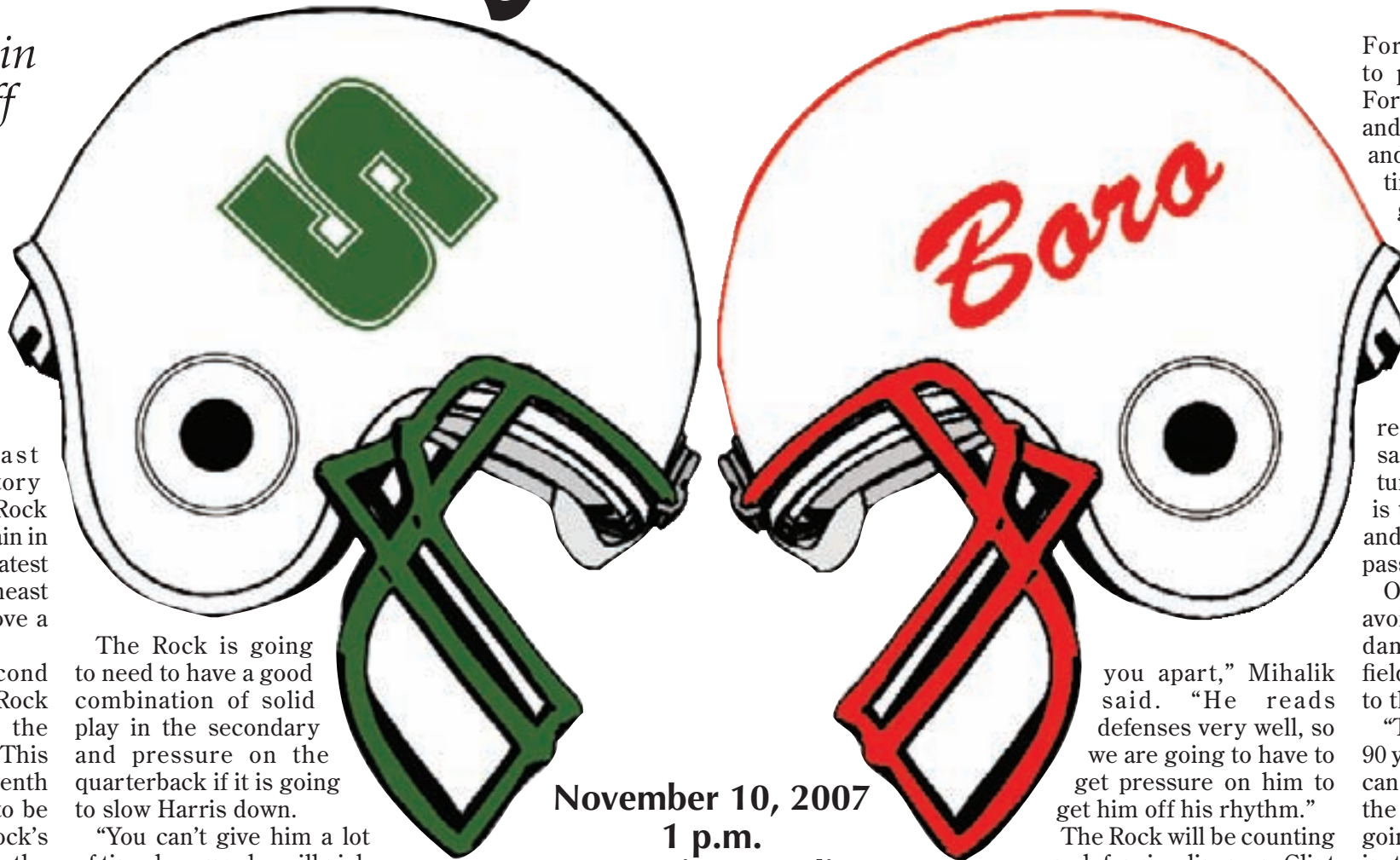
Instead, for the second time this season, the Rock (8-2, 3-2) dropped in the rankings after a win. This time the drop from seventh to eighth could prove to be the fatal blow in the Rock's playoff hopes, as only the top six teams qualify.

"I said it before, and I truly believe that a 9-2 record is enough to get us into the playoffs," Rock Head Coach George Mihalik said. "If we go out there and do our job, I think we deserve to be in."

Obtaining that ninth win of the season is going to be a challenging task as the Rock will travel to Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference West foe Edinboro (7-3, 3-2) for Saturday's do-or-die contest.

Edinboro is led by reigning PSAC Rookie of the Year in quarterback Trevor Harris, who has thrown for an impressive 2,983 yards and 28 touchdowns this season.

"He is good," Mihalik said. "He has no weaknesses. He is what makes them go. You have to stop him and nobody has been able to do that this year."



The Rock is going to need to have a good combination of solid play in the secondary and pressure on the quarterback if it is going to slow Harris down. "You can't give him a lot of time because he will pick

you apart," Mihalik said. "He reads defenses very well, so we are going to have to get pressure on him to get him off his rhythm." The Rock will be counting on defensive linemen Clint

**November 10, 2007
1 p.m.
Sox Harrison Stadium**

Forsha and Cory Lacek to provide that pressure. Forsha, who has 55 tackles and nine sacks on the year and Lacek, who has missed time this season due to a groin injury, must force Harris into making quick decisions if the Rock is going to slow down the 'Boro passing game.

"Our last four games, our team defense has really improved," Mihalik said. "We are generating turnovers and a lot of that is thanks to our front four and their ability to rush the passer."

One thing the Rock must avoid is giving an already-dangerous offense better field position when it comes to the start of possessions.

"They are dangerous from 90 yards," Mihalik said. "We can't be letting them start at the 50 every time. So we are going try some new combos in the coverage game and play more starters during that time."

Mihalik knows that the Edinboro offense is predicated on the quick strike and that the key to the game is going to be keeping the Fighting Scots' high-powered offense off the field.

"We need to have some 10- to 15-play drives that ideally keep that offense on the sidelines as long as we can," Mihalik said. "We would like to control the game, and by doing so, we put ourselves in a better position to win."

The job of keeping the 'Boro offense off the field will fall on the legs of running back Corey Manfull, who has amassed 1,086 yards on the ground despite missing two games with a shoulder injury.

SEE GUT, PAGE C-6

The Rock (8-2, 3-2)

VS.

Edinboro (7-3, 3-2)

Slippery Rock	Advantage	Edinboro
BREAKDOWNS		
Offense SRU boasts the league's top offense, averaging 460.0 yards per game, led by Corey Manfull's 135 yards rushing per game.	SRU	Offense Reigning PSAC West Rookie of the Year QB Trevor Harris leads the conference in touchdowns and passing yards.
Defense The Rock enters the game allowing just 18.8 points per game, good for third in the conference.	SRU	Defense Edinboro is giving up nearly 370 yards a game to opposing offense's, with 233 coming through the air.
Special Teams The special-teams game has been a problem area all year, as the Rock has yet to find the right pieces to the puzzle.	BORO	Special Teams Edinboro ranks near the bottom of the league in both punting and kick-off return averages.

This is a must-win for the Rock, which dropped to eighth in the regional poll despite last week's victory over Lock Haven. The top six teams get a spot in the national playoffs. Edinboro QB Trevor Harris is dangerous and is the key to victory for 'Boro. The Rock needs to slow Harris and the passing game and keep the Fighting Scots' offense off the field. The Rock wants to prove they belong with the elite. This is a statement game for Mihalik's bunch. Prediction: SRU 38-16

Women's soccer falls in PSAC final

Looks to topple Adelphi in first round of nationals

By Brandon Fox
Rocket Sports Editor

A Rock victory in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Championship would have capped off a record-setting season.

It would have given the Rock (16-4-1) the opportunity to host its first-ever NCAA regional playoff game.

It would have given the team two straight victories over West Chester, the defending PSAC and Northeast Regional champions.

It would have been fitting.

But it wasn't.

Instead, West Chester had its own plans. Plans that included capturing a second consecutive PSAC championship and exacting a measure of revenge against a Rock team that dominated the Golden Rams in a 3-1 victory on Oct. 20.

With its 2-0 victory,



Senior midfielder Jaimi Wilson points downfield looking for an open teammate. Wilson had an assist in last Friday's 2-0 PSAC semifinal victory over Edinboro.

West Chester received vaulted themselves into an automatic bid into the No. 2 position in the the regional playoffs and Regional rankings. The

Rock remained in third and also earned a second-consecutive trip to NCAA postseason competition.

Sunday's game, which was hosted by West Chester, was scoreless until the Golden Rams converted a penalty kick in the 72nd minute to go up 1-0.

"The penalty kick was very disappointing," Rock Head Coach Noreen Herlihy said. "Especially in a championship game and at the time it occurred. But you know it is something that is part of the game."

The Rock would not let WCU coast to victory, though, and was able to pressure the Golden Rams as the game was winding down.

But West Chester put the icing on the cake in the 87th minute when Sarah Oswald put a shot past Rock goalie Lauren McManus to give the Golden Rams a 2-0 victory.

SEE ROCK, PAGE C-5

Rock not-so-rowdies: Student support lacking



PHIL SWARTZLANDER

Gettin' your Phil

Attention Slippery Rock students: This is your notice that our institution does, in fact, play competitive sports, and they sometimes venture outside the realm of playing our rival, IUP.

We do have teams outside of football and its one-game-a-week schedule, and in fact the team is doing really well. But by looking into the stands you might not know that athletics actually exist.

All of SRU's sports teams this fall, with the exception of field hockey, have excelled.

The support the teams have received, however, might suggest that all of them could be considered average at best.

Women's soccer qualified for the NCAA playoffs, football is having a great year, men's soccer fought, literally, until the last whistle blew, and volleyball has a shot at making the regional playoffs despite its lackluster PSAC record. Ask some of the

SEE PLENTY PAGE C-4