

Cards end season in Texas, 33-28

By BILL KERSTEN

The William Jewell Cardinals were defeated by the Austin College Kangaroos Saturday in the NAIA Division II semifinal game played in Sherman, Texas. It was a hard-fought contest with the final score at 33-28.

The contest was not decided until the final minute.

As the game started out, the tension of both teams was evident. Art Davis, defensive end for the Cardinals, recovered an Austin fumble on the opening kickoff. The Cardinals put their offense on the field on the Austin 24-yard line. A Kelly Groom pass to receiver Marty Hensley moved the ball to the 9-yard line. first and goal. Steve Hodges capped the drive with a 6-yard run, and after a Jerry Burch conversion, the Cardinals led 7-0.

The Cardinals forced the Kangaroos to punt in the next series, but it was fumbled by senior Mike McGill on the Jewell 31-yard line. On the first play, Austin's Kodak All-American quarterback Larry Shillings threw a screen pass to tailback Van Hargis in the end zone. After the conversion, it was one mistake for each team, and 7-7.

The Cardinals' jitters continued when a fourth down punt by Jewell's Jeff McGuire was blocked and the Kangaroos put the ball into play on the Cardinals' 17-yard line. On second down, Shillings passed to Clay Oliphant in the end zone for a touchdown. The conversion was wide, and it was 13-7 in favor of Austin College.

The Cardinals then engineered their best offensive drive of the game, as they took over on their own 20-yard line following a punt. Steve Hodges began the drive on a 29-yard reverse. Quarterback Kelly Groom ended the 80-yard scoring drive with a 2-yard bootleg play into the end

zone. The Cardinals took a 14-13 lead with 10:39 remaining in the half. Not to be outdone, the Kangaroos used a 10-play drive that was capped by a Gene Branum 22-yard field goal. That ended the first half scoring, with the Kangaroos ahead 16-14.

Rory Dukes of Austin College opened the second half by taking the kickoff by Jerry Burch at the 6-yard line and exploding upfield for 49 yards to the Cardinal 45-yard line. Ten plays later Shillings found his fullback, Dave Simmons, for a 13-yard scoring strike. With the conversion, it was Austin up by 9 points, 23-14.

With 5:54 left in the third quarter, the Cardinals again showed great poise. A pass from Groom to Hensley was good for 38 yards, putting the Cardinals on the Austin 9-yard line. On third down Mike McGill caught a deflected pass in the end zone. It was a touchdown for the Cardinals, closing the gap to 23-21 in favor of Austin.

In the fourth quarter, the passing of Larry Shillings continued to be almost flawless as Oliphant gathered one in at the 1-yard line. Shillings then followed blocking into the end zone, putting Austin up 30-21.

The Cardinals showed determination and desire, and, after taking over on the 20-yard line they marched upfield. Scoop Gillespie ran for 10 yards, and Mike Phillips gathered in a pass and rambled for 12 more. Hodges then ran for 33 yards, putting the ball on the Austin 24-yard line. The 11th play of the drive was a Steve Hodges 6-yard burst, good for a touchdown, and it was still a ball game, 30-28, with 7:35 remaining.

A Cardinal fumble by Steve Hodges put the ball near midfield, and with 1:27 remaining, Branum kicked his second 22-yard field goal of the game, putting the Kangaroos ahead by 5, 33-28.

The Cardinals had the ball,

needing a touchdown, but they were unable to move the ball on the alert Austin defense. A fourth down play failed to get the necessary first down, and that was the ball game.

Head Coach Vic Wallace was complimentary of the winners: "We knew their passing was great, and we knew their speed was excellent. But their execution was what won the game. Both teams had the breaks, but Austin scored on both Cardinal fumbles in the first quarter, and we never were able to fully regroup."

Looking back on his first season, Coach Wallace told his players following the game, "All year, we have won as a team, and everything we accomplished has been as a team. Today we lost. But, we lost as a team. Every player can look back and see a mistake that was made during the game, but the loss was a team loss."

"I was really pleased with the great fan support we have enjoyed all year, Wallace added. I realize nearly 400 Cardinal friends and alumni came into Texas today to cheer us on. We appreciate them very much."

Austin will play Concordia College Dec. 12, in Sherman, Texas, for the national championship.

The Cardinals out gained their opponents in total yards, 366 to Austin's 318. They rushed for 201 yards while holding Austin to 84 yards on 50 carries. The passing of Shillings was good for 234 yards on 15 completions while Groom netted 165 yards on 11 completions. Each team committed three turnovers.

It was a very successful, though heartbreaking season for the Cardinals. They finished 11-1-0 and won the Heart of America Championship. With a good nucleus of players returning next year, they are expected to again be a national powerhouse.