



Crean Lutheran ends St. Margaret's win streak

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IRVINE - For Crean Lutheran coach **Brett Mertens**, it was execution at its finest.

Facing St. Margaret's in an Academy League game Thursday night, clock management and fourth-down conversions proved vital in a 26-20 win for Crean Lutheran, which snapped the Tartans' 38-game league win streak.

The win was the Saints' first over St. Margaret's in school history. The Tartans' loss was their first in league since 2004.

The Saints converted all five of their fourth-down attempts, including two on their final drive to secure the victory.

"It's an amazing feeling to beat a team that hadn't lost a league game in 10 years," Saints running back **Garrett Cox** said. "We came in with a game plan and we executed."

Crean Lutheran's offensive line provided space for 235 rushing yards. The Saints' run game set up a pair of touchdown passes from **Gavin Folsom** to **Nick Elwein** in the first half.

Cox led all rushers with 92 yards on 24 carries. Folsom added 14 carries for 81 yards and a four-yard TD run that gave Crean Lutheran a 26-13 lead early in the fourth quarter.

The win ensures at least a split league title for Crean Lutheran. The Saints have a chance to win it outright next week with a win over Brethren Christian.

St. Margaret's made the most of limited offensive opportunities. **George Krantz** completed 10 of 17 passes for 161 yards and two TDs. He added a 5-yard rushing TD.

St. Margaret's was held to 13 plays on 5:28 of possession time in the first half. Krantz hit **Auston Locke** to pull the Tartans to 26-20 with 5:29 left, but the Saints ran out the remaining clock.

"They had some guys out and we knew we had opportunities to run the ball," Mertens said. "This is the best group you could ask for as a coach. I'm the luckiest coach in the world."

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