



Illinois Wesleyan vs. Aurora September 20, 2008 Aurora Field, Aurora, Ill.

THE GAME: Illinois Wesleyan (2-0) plays against the Aurora Spartans (also 2-0) in a 1 p.m. kickoff at Aurora Field.

THE SERIES VS. THE SPARTANS: Illinois Wesleyan has a 2-0 lead in the series against Aurora with a win at home and away...IWU won, 21-12, in 1992 in the first round of the NCAA Division III playoffs at IWU's Wilder Field...The Titans claimed a 7-6 victory at Aurora in 2000...The game scheduled for Sept. 15, 2001 in Bloomington between the Titans and Spartans was cancelled after the terrorist events of Sept. 11.

SEPTEMBER: The Titans are 2-0 for the first time since 2002 when they started with four straight wins (at Wis.-LaCrosse, 35-31; Washington U., 31-24 in OT; at Chicago, 34-16; North Park, 49-9)...In September, IWU is 40-19-1 (.689) in the Norm Eash era and is 2-0 this season after going 2-2 last season in the month...IWU teams won 11 straight September games (all non-league) from 1995 (loss at Simpson) until 2001 (loss to Washington U.).

FOR THE RECORD: IWU is 80-44 in its last 124 games (.645) since 1995...The Titans are 70-28 (.711) at home and 56-45-1 on the road (.550) under Norm Eash...The 44 losses have come to Wheaton (8); Augustana (7); Millikin (6); North Central (5); Carthage (4); Elmhurst (3); Simpson, UW-Eau Claire, Mt. St. Joseph and Coe (2); and Mount Union, UW-LaCrosse, and Washington U. (1)... Last year IWU finished 7-3 overall and earned a share of the CCIW championship for the first time since 2001. It was IWU's 13th league title ... IWU's last three consecutive losing seasons before 2004-06 were 1941-43...2004 and 2005 were the first back-to-back losing seasons since 1987 (4-5) and 1988 (4-5)...In 2004, IWU (3-7) had its first sub-.500 season since the 1993 team was 4-5. The Titans had been at .500 or better for 10 straight years.

ON TO THE NEXT 500: IWU is 513-381-42 (.570) in 116+ football seasons... The 500th win came in a 23-14 win over Wheaton on Oct. 22, 2005.

LAST WEEK: Junior quarterback Kraig Ladd (Shelbyville, Ill. HS) tied a school record with six touchdown passes as Illinois Wesleyan improved to 2-0 with a 48-34 win over Alma at

IWU Stadium on Sept. 13. Ladd completed 17 of 26 passes for 272 yards in tying the TD passing efforts by Lon Erickson (North Park, 1995) and Brad Forsyth (Carroll, 1989). Two TD passes were Martin Ceisel (Deerfield, Ill., HS) and two more to Tom Almanzo (Elk Grove Village, Ill. Elk Grove HS) while Eli Williams (Westville, Ill., HS) and Rick Podkowa (Glenview, Ill., Niles Notre Dame HS) each had one. Senior Christian Winston (Chicago, Ill., Walther Lutheran HS) rushed for 126 yards on 30 carries, his second straight week over 100 yards rushing. The last time the Titans scored more than 48 points was in a 2003 win over Millikin (49 points). Nick Nikolich (Libertyville, Ill. HS) led IWU with seven tackles and Robert Beauchamp (Cerro Gordo, Ill., HS) added six. Josh Monk (Bloomington, Central Catholic HS) blocked a punt early in the game that was returned for a 15 yard TD by Chris Messina (Chicago, Ill., Nazareth Academy). Alma's Mackenzie McGrady completed 26 of 41 passes for 352 yards and two touchdowns but was sacked six times. Jeremy Stephens caught 11 passes for 192 yards for the Scots (1-1). Travis Martin had a game-high 13 tackles for Alma.

IWU PLAYERS OF THE WEEK: *Chosen by Titan coaches to honor top players in the week's game and practices. The "Titan Award" honors a player for work ethic, loyalty and spirit.*
Offense – Kraig Ladd, junior, quarterback, Shelbyville, Ill. (HS)
Defense – Max Brooks, sophomore, line, Oak Park, Ill. (Oak Park-River Forest HS)
Special Teams – Josh Monk, senior, linebacker, Bloomington, Ill. (Central Catholic HS); Chris Messina, junior, receiver, Chicago, Ill. (Nazareth Academy)

Scout Offense – James Mosterd, sophomore, line, Tinley Park, Ill. (Andrew HS); Matt Berg, freshman, back, Grayslake, Ill. (Carmel HS)
Scout Defense – Bert Blodgett, freshman, line, Palatine, Ill. (Fremd HS); Sean Derrig, freshman, linebacker, Deerfield, Ill. (HS)
Titan Award – Rick Podkowa, senior, tight end, Glenview, Ill. (Niles Notre Dame HS)

COACH NORM EASH: Norm Eash (Illinois Wesleyan, 1975) is in his 22nd season at IWU and has a career record of 128-73-1 (.636), making him second among IWU coaches in victories (Eash's college coach, Don Larson, had 168 wins from 1954-86). Prior to 2006, Eash ranked 50th among all-time Division III coaches in winning percentage and 67th in victories (24th among active coaches in wins). The "dean" of league coaches, Eash has been College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin "Coach of the Year" in 2007, 2001, 1996 and 1992. His career CCIW mark is 95-56-1 (.630), making him fourth all-time in victories in the league.

MARTIN CEISEL: Senior Martin Ceisel (Deerfield, Ill. HS) is No. 4 all-time at IWU with 2,432 receiving yards (No. 3 is Ed Brady, 2,907, 1981-84), No. 4 with 26 receiving touchdowns (No. 3 is Ryan Tusek, 27, 1993-96) and No. 4 with 156 receptions (No. 3 is Brady, 220).

CCIW IN THE POLLS: Wheaton is No. 10 and North Central is No. 12 in week No. 3 of the D3football.com poll, voted on by a panel of 25 coaches, sports information directors and media members from across the country. Carthage (3 votes) and Illinois Wesleyan (1) also received votes in the weekly poll... The Titans were No. 40 in the preseason D3football.com poll.

ABOUT AURORA: Aurora is 2-0 for the first time since 1992, when AU became the first Chicagoland Division III football program to make the Division III playoffs and went on to lose to Illinois Wesleyan... The Spartans have wins over Lake Forest (35-13) and MacMurray (30-18)... The win over Lake Forest was Aurora's first non-conference victory since 2001 (Valparaiso University) and first time opening the season 1-0 since 1999... Junior running back Ryne Reder was named the Northern Athletics Conference offensive player of the week for the Spartans' 30-18 win over

MacMurray on Sept. 13. Reder led the AU offense with 102 yards rushing on 23 attempts and one touchdown. He also added one reception for 12 yards. His third quarter two-yard touchdown run put the Spartans up 21-18 and a lead AU would not relinquish... Against Lake Forest, senior defensive back Matt Meyer was named NAC defensive player of the week as he led an AU defense that forced four turnovers (all interceptions) including grabbing two himself. He returned his first pickoff 74 yards for a touchdown. As AU's punter, Meyer punted five times for 213 yards (42.6 average) and a long of 53.

ON THE AIR: The IWU/Aurora game will be broadcast live on WJBC 1230 AM (on the Internet at www.wjbc2.com) with Eric Stock and Joel Swanson.

LOOKING AHEAD: IWU will be idle next week and return to action on October 4 against Carthage at 2 p.m. in the Titan Homecoming game.

IWU'S 2008 CCIW HONORS: Senior kicker Joe Duffy (Oak Lawn, Ill., Brother Rice High School) was CCIW special teams player of the week for his play vs. Hope Sept. 6. He had field goals of 39 and 36 yards in the 28-25 win. His 39-yard field goal came just 59 seconds into the game to give the Titans a 3-0 lead. His 36-yard field goal came with 1:51 to play to stake IWU to a 28-19 lead and proved to be the margin of victory as Hope scored a minute later. Duffy also added two extra-point kicks.

SEASON OPENERS: With the win at Hope on Sept. 6, IWU is 11-11 in opening-day games under Norm Eash. Prior to last weekend, the Titans had dropped their last five season openers, last winning in 2002 (35-31 at Wisconsin-LaCrosse).

CCIW PRESEASON POLL: Illinois Wesleyan was picked to finish third in the 2008 CCIW preseason coaches' poll. The Titans got 33 points from the league coaches. North Central got six first place votes (and 48 points) to finish first in the poll, followed by Wheaton (two first place votes, 44 points). After Wesleyan comes Augustana, Carthage, Elmhurst, Millikin and North Park.