

# College of DuPage Chaparrals to Defend NJCAA National Title

NEWS RELEASE BY COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

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A clash between the defending national champion College of DuPage Chaparrals and top-seed North Dakota State College of Science Wildcats will take place in the second annual NJCAA Division III Football Championship at the Red Grange Bowl on Saturday, Dec. 3, at COD's Bjarne Ullsvik Stadium. Kickoff is at noon.

Tickets are \$10 and are available for sale (cash only) at the point of entry on gameday. Tickets also may be purchased online through the McAninch Arts Center Box Office. Proof of purchase is required on gameday. Visit [atthemac.org](http://atthemac.org) for tickets.

The No. 2 seed Chaparrals (8-2 overall) will defend their national title after leading the division this season in points (38.2), total yards/game (425.25) and rushing yards/game (240.1).

They posted a 4-0 record against D3 opponents and were 3-2 against Division I scholarship foes.

"When we play a schedule where we face multiple Division I programs and perform the way that we've performed, we expect to play in the title game," said Head Coach Matthew Rahn. "We'll approach this as just another game for us and another opportunity to be the best that we can be. I'm excited for our kids. All of the hard work they've put into this season, they deserve it"

Two-time national offensive player of the week quarterback Gavin Sukup threw for 1,293 yards on 93 of 146 attempts with 15 TDs and just one interception. The Seward, Nebraska native owns a passing efficiency of 170.6. Four Chaparrals rank among the top 12 rushers in the country with freshman Brian Trobel (fourth, 449 yards), Samson Zander (seventh, 432 yards), Jaden McGill (11th, 399 yards) and Sukup (12th, 387 yards) leading the way.

The Chaps are just as impressive on defense, with All-American defensive end Michael Simon second in the division in tackles for loss (13.5) and defensive linebacker Byron Puryear fourth (11.5). Strong safety Guy Goss is a two-time defensive player of the week and is third in solo tackles (36).

The defense allowed 14.4 points a game this season, third in the division. Sophomore place-kicker Joshua Winslow is the leading scorer D3, hitting 6 of 7 field goals (long 29) and converting 48 of 50 points after touchdown.

The NDSCS Wildcats are the top seed after winning the Minnesota College Athletic Conference championship, defeating previously unbeaten and top-ranked Minnesota State Community and Technical College 19-0 on Nov. 6 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. NDSCS allows a division-best 176.1 yards per game.

The national championship game recognizes the feats of the late Red Grange, one of football's all-time greats and arguably the game's greatest all-time offensive player. The Wheaton native, nicknamed the "Galloping Ghost" and the "Wheaton Iceman," is a charter member of both the Pro (1963) and College (1951) Football Halls of Fame. His single-greatest feat remains almost fantasy – scoring four touchdowns in the opening 12 minutes versus Michigan in the University of Illinois Memorial Stadium dedication game on Oct. 18, 1924. All told in that game, he was responsible for six touchdowns against the Wolverines and totaled 409 all-purpose yards.

Grange went on to earn three All-American honors at Illinois and became the first major signing by Chicago Bears owner and Head Coach George Halas. Later that year, Halas took Grange and the Bears on a coast-to-coast tour in which the club played 16 games in nine weeks. That effort is thought to have saved the National Football League and fortified Grange as a household name in America, among the likes of such legends as Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey.

This marks the second straight year the NJCAA DIII Football Championship at the Red Grange Bowl will be played at College of DuPage. The Chaps defeated Nassau Community College (New York) 34-29 in the inaugural championship Dec. 4, 2021. The NJCAA announced this past summer that the 2022-24 DIII Football Championships will be played at Ullsvik Stadium.

COD is aiming for its third national championship title in less than a month when the Chaps take on the Wildcats on Dec. 3. COD, which has won 39 national championships in school history, won the men's cross-country championship in Westfield, Massachusetts on Nov. 5 and the women's volleyball program won the national crown Nov. 12 in Rochester, Minnesota.

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