

Titans, Tommies battle for berth in National Championship football game

by **Kennan Timm - Monday, December 03, 2012**

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Teams that have combined to win their last 28 games meet when fifth-ranked University of Wisconsin Oshkosh visits fourth-ranked University of St. Thomas in a semifinal-round game of the NCAA Division III Football Championship Saturday, Dec. 8 in St. Paul, Minn.

Kickoff is scheduled for 2 p.m. at O'Shaughnessy Field.

UW Oshkosh, champion of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC), owns a 13-0 record after marking playoff wins of 55-10 over The College of St. Scholastica (Minn.), 37-14 over 21st-ranked Bethel University (Minn.) and 31-24 (overtime) over third-ranked Linfield College (Ore.). The Titans have won 15 consecutive contests for the longest active winning streak in NCAA football.

The University of St. Thomas, champion of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, also holds a 13-0 record. The Tommies remained alive in this year's 32-team tournament after posting playoff victories of 48-17 over St. Norbert College, 24-17 over 17th-ranked Elmhurst College (Ill.) and 47-7 over seventh-ranked Hobart College (N.Y.).

UW Oshkosh and the University of St. Thomas played two common opponents this year in UW-Eau Claire and UW-River Falls. The Titans defeated UW-Eau Claire, 50-13, and UW-River Falls, 19-7, while the Tommies ousted UW-Eau Claire, 27-24, and UW-River Falls, 43-9.

UW Oshkosh is appearing in NCAA postseason play for the first time in the 118-year history of the school's football program. The Titans join UW-Whitewater (33), UW-La Crosse (16) and UW-Eau Claire (3) as the only WIAC schools with at least three NCAA postseason victories.

The University of St. Thomas is competing in the NCAA playoffs for the fourth straight year and fifth time overall. The Tommies suffered a 20-0 loss to eventual champion UW-Whitewater in the semifinal round of last year's championship.

Both teams rank among the NCAA Division III statistical leaders in several categories. UW Oshkosh ranks 11th in the country in total offense (494.62 yards) and turnover margin (+18), 16th in rushing offense (256.77 yards), scoring offense (39.31 points) and scoring defense (14.92 points) and 19th in rushing defense (92.08 yards). The University of St. Thomas ranks 10th in the nation in rushing defense (80.85 yards), 11th in scoring defense (14.15 points), 16th in total defense (277.31 yards), 17th in total offense (473.92 yards) and 22nd in rushing offense (246.54 yards).

UW Oshkosh and the University of St. Thomas have met three previous times, but with no matchups in the last four decades. The Titans lost 67-0 to the Tommies in 1914 before winning games of 23-21 in

1968 and 34-20 in 1969.

The winner of Saturday's contest advances to play top-ranked University of Mount Union (Ohio) or second-ranked University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (Texas) in the national championship game (Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl) on Dec. 14 in Salem, Va.

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