



## **Arlan's heroics carry Townies to state crown**

**The senior scores two touchdowns and shines on defense as East Providence captures its second straight title.**

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EAST PROVIDENCE -- Last year, he was the young kid proving himself. Yesterday, East Providence's Sean Arlan was the proven superstar taking control when the game was on the line.

Arlan, a senior quarterback and defensive back, led the undefeated Townies to their second consecutive state title as his two touchdowns and three pass interceptions paved the way for a 19-6 victory over La Salle in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island Division I Super Bowl at Pierce Field.

The performance, which earned Arlan the MVP award, was his second outstanding Super Bowl effort in two years. A year ago, he scored two touchdowns in the Townies 35-21 victory over La Salle. But until his Super Bowl performance, there were some who questioned whether he should have been the starting quarterback throughout the season because he had struggled in some early-season games.

This season, however, he has been a star right from the start. When the Rams and Townies came into the second half yesterday locked in a scoreless battle, a lot of East Providence fans were looking to Arlan to break the game open.

He certainly didn't disappoint them.

With 40 seconds to play in the third quarter, he finally broke the deadlock when he faked a pass, then broke out of the pocket on a 27-yard touchdown run.

Then on the first play from scrimmage after La Salle had cut the deficit to 7-6 early in the fourth quarter, Arlan broke out of the pocket again and this time raced 46 yards for another TD.

On the ensuing series, he forced La Salle to punt from deep in its own territory when he deflected a pass on a third-down play. Eight plays after East Providence took control at the La Salle 36 after the punt, the Townies' Jerome Blair took the suspense out of the game with a 12-yard touchdown run.

The pass deflection was one of several key defensive plays by Arlan, including a pass interception that stopped a La Salle drive at the East Providence 25 on the first series of the second half.

He also picked off two other passes by La Salle's All-State quarterback Liam Coen in the first half.

"Last year was Jamie's team," Arlan said about former East Providence star running back Jamie Silva, who was the MVP of last year's Super Bowl. "This year, I figured I needed to step it up in the second half."

"He's a tremendous athlete," East Providence coach Sandy Gorham remarked about Arlan. "He's as fine a defensive back as I have ever coached and he's now the first East Providence player to quarterback two consecutive state championship teams since 1980."

Yesterday's game might not have matched the suspense the Rams and Townies generated on Thanksgiving Day when they battled to a 21-21 tie in regulation before East Providence eventually posted a 28-27 overtime victory. But yesterday's contest certainly came close to matching the Thanksgiving Day classic, especially in the first half.

Both defensive units were operating in high gear during the first 24 minutes as La Salle held East Providence to only 36 yards of total offense, and the Townies limited the Rams to 81 yards.

"The hitting was fierce in the first half," said Gorham. "It was like the Thriller in Manila. They were going toe-to-toe."

In an effort to shut down the potent East Providence running game, La Salle coach Tim Coen stacked his defensive unit up close. Most of the time, the Rams had 10 players within five yards of the line of scrimmage.

The strategy paid dividends as the Rams held the Townies to net-zero yardage on four of their six possessions in the first half.

While the East Providence defense kept La Salle out of the end zone in the first half, the Rams had some success moving the ball. Twice the Rams moved inside the East Providence 30, but Arlan stopped both drives. First he intercepted a pass at East Providence 23, and later he deflected a pass on a fourth-down play from the East Providence 18.

The Rams' attack suffered a serious setback midway through the first half when their big senior tight end Steve Falvo suffered a back injury when he came down hard after making a pass reception. Falvo never returned to the game.

"It really hurt not having him in there," said La Salle coach Tim Coen. "Without (Falvo) in there, Arlan

could stay on (Ryan) Bohem, (the Rams star senior wide receiver) all the time.

"The difference was they made the big plays when they needed to and we didn't," Coen said. "I thought our defense played great all day. It certainly was a great game, at least for the first half."

After Arlan's first touchdown and a conversion boot by Sam Lovett had given East Providence the 7-0 lead in the final minute of the third quarter, Liam Coen marched the Rams 60 yards for a touchdown on the ensuing series. Coen's nine-yard pass to Josh Lima accounted for the touchdown.

The Rams tried to take the lead with a two-point conversion attempt, but once again Arlan came up with a big play as he broke up a pass in the end zone.

The victory gave East Providence an 11-0 record, including a 10-0 mark against Division I competition. East Providence now has won three of the past five Division I state titles. La Salle has won the other two.

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La Salle scoring: Lima (9 pass from Coen).

East Providence: Arlan 2 (27 run, 46 run); Blair (12 run). Conversion -- Lovett (kick).

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