



JOHN SLAVIN / Inquirer Suburban Staff

Downingtown's Omar Muhammad is brought down by Neshaminy defender Austin Jones (42). Neshaminy earned a 37-20 victory in Friday night's PIAA Class AAAA subregional semifinal playoff game. Redskins running back Jamar Brittingham was the star of the show.

Brittingham has Whippets' respect

By Rick O'Brien

INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

LANGHORNE — Everyone knows about Jamar Brittingham's catlike quickness and electrifying moves on the football field.

However, before Friday night's PIAA Class AAAA subregional semifinal playoff game against Downingtown, many didn't know about the considerable strength of the Neshaminy High running back.

One play, in the fourth quarter of the Redskins' 37-20 victory, gave the overflow crowd at Harry E. Franks Stadium all it needed to see.

With four defenders clushing at him and one draped squarely on his back, Brittingham churned his legs and carried the helpless group nearly 5 yards before being brought down. The eye-catching 9-yard pickup left Neshaminy 1 yard shy of its fourth touchdown of the night.

"We knew he was a great one," Jack Helm, Downingtown's coach, said of Brittingham. "He does the things that the great ones do. He's very difficult to handle."

Brittingham, who sat out part of the second quarter after injuring his left thumb on defense, carried the ball 19 times for 215 yards and a touchdown as the top-seeded Redskins (12-0) jumped out to a 10-0 lead and eased to their second playoff victory.

Neshaminy, the No. 1 team in The Inquirer's suburban rankings, will host third-seeded Conestoga in the Class AAAA quar-



Downingtown QB Matt Helm fumbles the ball while under pressure from Neshaminy's Pat Carroll (6) and Geoff Donahue (27). Donahue was involved in 15 tackles in Friday night's contest.

terfinals at 7:30 p.m. Friday. The Pioneers (11-1) ousted second-seeded Cheltenham, 34-31, in double overtime on Saturday. Brittingham, a major Division I recruit, increased his season rushing total to 2,058 yards. The speedy senior notched his 25th touchdown of the year in the closing minutes, darting off right tackle and sprinting 57 yards into the end zone.

"It was something I wanted to accomplish," Brittingham said of surpassing the 2,000-yard mark. "The line and [fullback] Jay Collins helped me do that. They've been blocking well all season."

Against fourth-seeded Down-

ingtown, the 6-foot-1, 190-pounder accounted for 215 of his team's 258 rushing yards.

Collins was the biggest beneficiary of Brittingham's performance. All three of his touchdown runs came from 2 yards and closer.

"People think that Jamar is just a slasher and a dancer," Collins said, "but he'll run over you, too. It usually takes more than one guy to tackle him."

A 69-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Jason Winter to wideout Keith Ennis gave the Redskins a 10-0 advantage less than six minutes into the game.

A 1-yard scoring plunge by Collins increased the lead to

24-7 with 7 minutes, 24 seconds remaining in the third quarter. The Whippets (9-3) never recovered.

"We're not the type of team that can get behind by two touchdowns or more," Helm said. "We're not a big-play team. We're a team that grinds it out. Once we got behind like that, we were in a lot of trouble."

Downingtown quarterback Matt Helm, the coach's son, completed 13 of 22 passes for 160 yards. The 5-11, 165-pound junior carried the ball 20 times for 94 yards and two touchdowns.

Neshaminy's defense was sparked by junior Geoff Donahue. The defensive end was involved in 15 tackles, including seven solo stops.

"He's a tough kid," Mark Schmidt, Neshaminy's coach, said of Donahue. "He was making plays for us left and right."

Collins, who also plays linebacker, and linebacker Pat Carroll combined for 22 tackles for the winners. Junior safety Devon Swope intercepted two of Helm's passes.

For Downingtown, senior running back Aaron Dykes netted 90 yards on 16 carries. The Ches-Mont League champions, who had a seven-game winning streak snapped, gained 227 of their 387 yards on the ground.

"They're a very good team," Brittingham said of the Whippets. "We just came out and played harder than them. I guess we wanted it more."

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