

Unbeaten Redskins win

Neshaminy defeated Conestoga, 28-12, and advanced to Class AAAA football semifinals

By Rick O'Brien

INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

LANGHORNE — Keith Ennis is expected to be the starting point guard for this year's Neshaminy High basketball squad.

Note to Redskins coach Joe Blair: Ennis doesn't plan to join the team before Dec. 10, more than a week after its first game of the 2001-02 campaign.

The same goes for Jamar Brittingham, who last season helped the team to a 19-9 record and the championship of the Suburban One League's Patriot Division.

"After the football season, me and Jamar will probably take a week off and then jump into the basketball season," Ennis said. "We're concentrating on football right now, trying to win the big one."

Sparked by Ennis and Brittingham, Neshaminy moved to within a victory of "the big one" at HersheyPark Stadium by beating visiting Conestoga, 28-12, Friday night at packed Harry E. Franks Stadium in the quarterfinal round of the PIAA Class AAAA state football playoffs.

"This means a lot to us," said Ennis, wearing the District 1 championship medal around his neck. "But we're going for the gold. We want to win the whole thing."

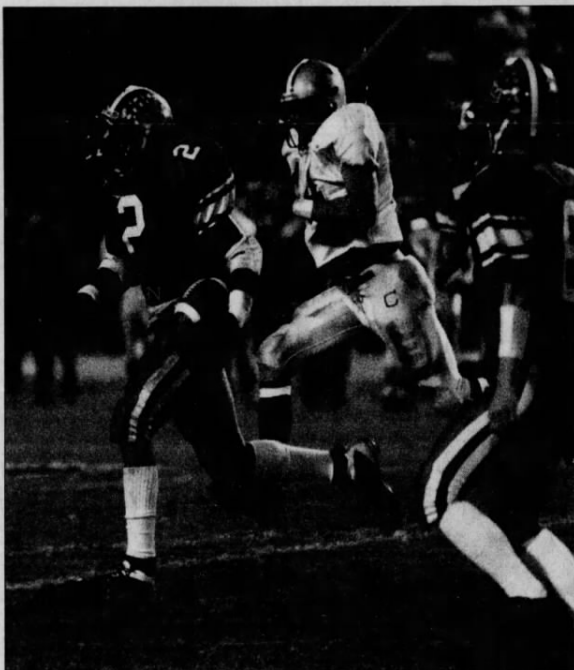
The Redskins (13-0) will meet Cumberland Valley (13-0) in the state semifinals on Saturday at HersheyPark Stadium at 1 p.m. The Eagles, champions of District 3, eliminated District 11's Bethlehem Catholic, 41-31, on Saturday.

The 5-foot-8, 175-pound Ennis, a senior wide receiver, will be handing out plenty of assists in basketball this season. After Friday's game against Conestoga, Brittingham can expect to see a few more passes coming his way.

On a halfback-option play that worked to perfection, Brittingham scooted toward the left sideline, drawing a horde of defenders to him, then tossed a 39-yard touchdown pass to a wide-open Ennis.

The score gave Neshaminy, the No. 1 team in The Inquirer's suburban rankings, a commanding 21-0 lead with less than four minutes remaining in the first half.

Ennis said he and Brittingham, a lefthanded thrower, had connected on the same play in a



JOHN SLAVIN / Inquirer Suburban Staff

Jamar Brittingham, who carried the ball 19 times for 178 yards, is chased by Conestoga's Chase Bower. Neshaminy QB Jason Wiater is at right. Brittingham scored his 26th TD. Bower notched 14 tackles.

33-6 win over Suburban One National Conference rival Harry S Truman on Sept. 13. Not for a touchdown, but for a big gain.

"Conestoga's cornerbacks were flying up all night, trying to stop the run," Ennis said. "As soon as Jamar got the ball, I knew they were going to bite on it. Their cornerback wasn't anywhere near me when I caught the ball."

Ennis — who plays cornerback on defense — has caught 45 passes for 682 yards this season. He has scored a touchdown in each of the Redskins' three playoff games.

The Pioneers (11-2) were forced to play catch-up after the hosts scored on their first two possessions.

The first score was courtesy of a 16-yard pass from quarterback Jason Wiater to wingback Mark Beck. A 2-yard, left-side dash by Brittingham capped a 14-play, 71-yard drive and improved Neshaminy's advantage to 14-0 with 10 minutes, 47 seconds remaining in the second

quarter.

Brittingham, at 6-1 and 190 pounds, carried the ball 19 times for 178 yards and notched his 26th touchdown of the season. The fleet-footed senior has rushed for 2,236 yards in 12 games.

Brittingham twisted his right knee on a short run in the closing minutes and had to be helped off the field.

Afterward, he said the knee was "fine" and that the only treatment he needed was a trip to the whirlpool.

Keyed by senior linebackers Jay Collins and Pat Carroll, Neshaminy's defense limited running back Steve Shea to only 52 yards on 15 carries. The senior workhorse had gained 167 yards on 29 carries in Conestoga's double-overtime win against Cheltenham in the subregional semifinals.

"I tried to run as hard as I could each time I touched the ball," Shea said, "but there wasn't too much room to run. Their run defense was awe-

some."

"They did a nice job of keying on Steve," said John Vogan, Conestoga's first-year coach. "When we got behind, we were forced to throw the ball more than we wanted to."

Early in the fourth quarter, a 1-yard scoring plunge by Collins increased Neshaminy's lead to 28-0.

Conestoga quarterback John D'Agostini fired two touchdown passes, both to wideout Dewey Burke, in the last nine minutes to account for the final score. The junior completed 12 of 22 passes for 219 yards.

The Pioneers defense was anchored by middle linebacker Chase Bower. The senior was involved in 14 tackles, including eight solo stops.

"We had a great year," Shea said. "To win 11 games and play for the district championship in front of all of these people was unbelievable. It was unreal."

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