

LUCKY 13: Neshaminy puts baker's dozen on All-Lower Bucks

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Neshaminy, Neshaminy, Neshaminy.

As in Player of the Year Jamar Brittingham, Coach of the Year Mark Schmidt and a Redskin squad that became the first from Lower Bucks to win a PIAA state championship.

The No. 1 team in Pennsylvania and The Trentonian's Ratings, Neshaminy also became the first team in this area to go 15-0. It was the first undefeated team in Lower Bucks since Pennsbury in 1985.

With those achievements, it's no wonder the Redskins are represented by a staggering 13 players on our first team.

At the top of the list, of course, is Brittingham, the sensational senior running back/corner who has Division 1 college scouts salivating. Compiling one of the greatest years in the history of local football, Brittingham ran for 2,607 yards on 369 carries and scored a whopping 30 touchdowns.

Also in the backfield are Neshaminy quarterback Jason Wiater and Pennsbury fullback Dan Baxter.

Wiater completed 107 of 182 passes for 1,499 yards, but he really stood out in his ability to make clutch plays.

One of his biggest came against Central Bucks West when he rallied the Skins with a TD pass on the last play of the game. In the state final, Wiater completely outperformed Pennsylvania's "Player of the Year," Woodland Hills quarterback Steve Breaston.

Baxter didn't have a ton of yardage for Pennsbury, but was a devastating blocker and tough in short-yardage situations.

The wide receivers are Neshaminy's Keith Ennis and Council Rock's Jim Renitsky.

Ennis did it all for Neshaminy, playing fine as a defensive back and contributing mightily on kick returns. As a receiver, the diminutive dynamo had 48 catches for 757 yards and five touchdowns.

Renitsky, who is drawing I-AA interest, had 34 catches for 694 yards and nine touchdowns for the Rock.

Our first team tight end is Neshaminy's Scott Mullin, who had some huge catches and was an excellent blocker.

The offensive line includes Neshaminy's Ryan Contento, Nick Feszko and Steve Brett, Pennsbury's Fred Seabright, Truman's Bob Paff and Bristol's Dante Reeves. Brett is probably the biggest recruit of this group, but they all received all-league honors and had superb seasons.

Rounding out the offense are Truman's Shaun Lenegan and Neshaminy kicker Kevin Kelly.

The elusive Lenegan showed he can run the ball by going for 1,181 yards and seven TD's despite the fact nobody was worried about the Tigers' passing game. In the Power 10 Conference, those kind of numbers are outstanding. He makes our team in an All-Purpose role.

Just a freshman, Kelly showed outstanding range by tying a Lower Bucks record with a 54-yard field goal against Pennsbury. He's already fitting in very nicely in a school with a strong kicking tradition that produced the Bahr brothers, Matt and Chris.

Turning to the defense, the line includes Bristol's John Pond, Pennsbury's Matt Applebaum, and Neshaminy's Geoff Donahue and Chuck Koch.

In just about any other season, Pond would have been the player of the year. All this Bristol senior did for four years was completely disrupt offenses to finish with an unofficial Pennsylvania sack record of 78. Also an excellent running back, Pond is drawing interest from Syracuse, among others.

Applebaum didn't have the same numbers as a year ago, but that's because he was often double teamed and Pennsbury usually lined him up against the other team's best lineman. He'll be playing football somewhere next year.

Koch and Donahue were also first team all-league selections. Koch seemed to keep coming up with one big sack after another in Neshaminy's state title drive. Donahue is just a junior and also had a huge year at fullback. He's going to be a Division 1 recruit all the way.

The linebackers are Conwell-Egan Joe Lamina, Neshaminy's Pat Carroll and Jay Collins, and Bensalem's Jon Nicoletti.

Neshaminy's leading tackler, Carroll had a monster season and might end up on the all-state team. Lamina was a tough two-way performer who was All-PCL and helped get Egan back on track.

Nicoletti was another all-league selection and Bensalem's leading tackler. Like Donahue, Collins also doubled as a fine fullback for Neshaminy. Collins always seemed to be around the ball and was one of the Skins' inspirational leaders.

The defensive backs are Truman's Mike Rossetti, Pennsbury's Ken Dunkerley, Neshaminy's Devon Swope and Council Rock's Brian Leonetti.

Rossetti, Dunkerley and Swope were first-team all-league selections. Rossetti was a fine coverage guy and also contributed running the ball.

Dunkerley got hurt midway through the season and it's no coincidence that when he departed, Pennsbury sagged. Swope is just a junior and made one of the plays of the year when he stripped a Cumberland Valley receiver of the ball late in the fourth quarter.

Leonetti was Rock's top coverage guy and is joined on the first team by punter and teammate Josh Mann.

Finally, Schmidt is the Coach of the Year. It truly was the Year of the Redskins, and there's no denying this guy had the magic touch in a season that will live forever in Neshaminy and Lower Bucks football lore.