

As Smith goes, so go the Colonials

By Rick O'Brien

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

It's not difficult to see how much Erick Smith means to the Plymouth Whitemarsh football team.

In the five games that Smith started and played the full 48 minutes, the Colonials emerged victorious. When the senior full-back and outside linebacker was not on the field in the late going of one closely played contest and missed another, the squad suffered defeats.

"He's a terrific football player on both sides of the ball," Plymouth Whitemarsh coach Joe Iacovitti said. "He does it all for us. He plays with a lot of heart and emotion."

The 5-foot-9, 170-pound Smith scored from the 1-yard line midway through the fourth quarter as the host Colonials turned back Hatboro-Horsham, 6-0, Saturday in a Suburban One League American Conference cross-divisional matchup.

Posting its third straight victory, Plymouth Whitemarsh is 5-2 overall and 3-1 in the Freedom Division. The Hatters are 3-3 overall and 2-1 in the Liberty Division.

Playing defense in the fourth quarter of a Sept. 13 matchup against Council Rock South, Smith was ejected for throwing a punch at an opposing player. The Golden Hawks scored several plays later and won, 21-20.

"I didn't throw a punch at the player," Smith said. "The referee

misread what happened on the play. I was trying to punch the ball out of his hands."

The controversial ejection brought with it a one-game suspension. With Smith out of the lineup, the Colonials were routed by Upper Merion, 28-7. The division-leading Vikings (6-0, 3-0) are ranked No. 4 in Southeastern Pennsylvania by The Inquirer.

"It was really tough missing that game," Smith said. "That was one of the biggest games of the season. I wanted to show everyone that we're better than them."

Against Hatboro-Horsham, Smith rushed 25 times for 102 yards.

"He's got good speed, vision and cutting ability," Iacovitti said. "He's a determined runner. He breaks tackles."

Smith has blocked two punts this year. In a season-opening win over La Salle, the 17-year-old returned a punt blocked by senior teammate Steve Le 20 yards for a score.

In its five wins, Plymouth Whitemarsh has yielded an average of 6.6 points and posted two shutouts.

"It's not just me on defense," Smith said. "We have two of the top linebackers in the area [seniors Eric Stokley and Tom Davis], and our line has been playing very well."

Pulling together. Despite losing fullback and defensive end

Geoff Donahue to injury in the first quarter, Neshaminy managed a 24-14 win at North Penn in a key Suburban One League National Conference Patriot Division matchup on Saturday.

Donahue twisted his ankle while running the ball. The 6-2, 240-pound senior is expected back for Saturday's division game against Central Bucks West (5-2, 1-0).

"We took him out because we didn't want to cause any extra swelling and possibly lose him for the rest of the season," Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt said.

The winning score against the Knights (4-2, 0-1) came on a 48-yard screen pass from senior quarterback Joe Crostarosa to junior running back Rodney Davis with 2 minutes, 35 seconds left in the game.

Senior defensive back Brian Burke provided an insurance score less than a minute later, picking off a pass and returning it 60 yards.

Other leaders on defense for the fifth-ranked Redskins (6-1, 2-0) were middle linebacker Zach Arnold and cornerback Dave Gates, both juniors. Gates recovered a fumble and blocked a 28-yard field goal try in the fourth quarter.

"Guys stepped up and made some big plays," Schmidt said. "We did a great job of covering the whole field."

Title contender. Wait another

Southeastern Pennsylvania Football Top 10

Records through yesterday.

Rk.	Team	Rec.	Comment
1.	St. Joseph's Prep	7-0	Against Roman Catholic, Matt Stefanski passed for 178 yards.
2.	Downingtown	7-0	Quarterback Matt Helm rushed for 102 yards against W.C. East.
3.	Strath Haven	7-0	Dan Connor scored four TDs in a rout of Marple Newtown.
4.	Upper Merion	6-0	The streaking Vikings visit Upper Moreland tonight at 7.
5.	Neshaminy	6-1	The Redskins' staunch defense was too much for North Penn.
6.	Penn Charter	4-1	End Jarrod Williams had five solo tackles against Malvern Prep.
7.	Pottstown	6-0	Will Upper Perkiomen be the first to score against the Trojans?
8.	Quakertown	6-0	Rain moved the Panthers' game against Souderton to tonight.
9.	Malvern Prep	2-3	The Friars were done in by Tony McDewitt and a muddy field.
10.	Sun Valley	7-0	It should not be a cakewalk against improved Garnet Valley.

Under consideration (listed alphabetically): La Salle (5-2), North Penn (4-2), Pennridge (4-2), Ridley (5-1), Roman Catholic (6-1).

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week before declaring Sun Valley as a lock to claim the Southern Chester County League championship.

Garnet Valley, 5-1 overall, is 4-0 in league play heading into Friday night's pivotal matchup against the No. 10 Vanguards (7-0, 4-0).

Seniors Rick Dunlap and Derek Schiller combined for 134 rushing yards as the visiting Jaguars recorded a 24-7 win on Saturday against division foe Bishop Shanahan. It was the squad's fifth straight win since a 21-19 loss to Chichester in the opener.

"We've played good solid team football," Garnet Valley coach Mike Ricci said. "A lot of guys are playing well and taking care of their responsibilities."

The Jaguars had too much firepower for the Eagles (2-4, 1-3). Dunlap rushed for two

scores, junior quarterback Jon Stroup completed 9 of 16 passes for 120 yards, and junior flanker Matt Sakers had six catches for 106 yards.

The offensive line was anchored by center Adam Bush, guard Chip McEnhill and tackle Jason Stroup. All are seniors.

With a potent offense, Sun Valley is averaging 33.6 points a game.

"They have talent all over the place," Ricci said. "We're going to do our best to give them a game."

Two-sport standout. Penn Charter's Tony McDewitt is headed to Duke on a lacrosse scholarship.

But the senior tailback and linebacker, who sparked Friday's 21-14 win over Inter-Academic League rival Malvern Prep, also plans to play football for the Blue Devils.

"Football is my favorite sport," said the mud-splattered

McDewitt after the Quakers (4-1, 1-0) had knocked off the Friars (2-3, 0-1). "That's where my heart is. I've talked to the people at Duke, and they're all for anything I want to do."

Against the defending Inter-Ac champions, McDewitt rushed 22 times for 85 yards and two scores.

It was the first time the 6-0, 205-pounder had played on offense since he suffered a left ankle injury — he tore ligaments in the same ankle last season — in a season-opening win versus Cardinal O'Hara. He sat out two games before returning to play defense in a Sept. 28 win over Interboro.

"I was ready to go," he said. "The game was too important for me to hold anything back."

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