

## LOCAL SPORTS

# Neshaminy's Grove breaking new ground

Ex-Norristown coach key assistant for Redskins' Schmidt

BY KEVIN COONEY  
*The Intelligencer*

LANGHORNE — This seems to be Roger Grove's most natural position.

Sitting at a table, watching game films roll on the VCR, hitting the rewind and fast-forward buttons and breaking an opposing defense down to its bare knuckles

### Football

Through the tops of his glasses, he will watch and jot down notes. On game nights, he will often have those notes in his hand, whispering suggestions to Mark Schmidt.

"I watch three or four hours worth of film on a given day," Grove said. "What I usually end up doing is trying to find tendencies and fronts that teams tend to use, and then find what would work in our playbook against them."

Roger Grove has been doing this job for years, mostly as head coach at Norristown. But for the first time in 30 years, he will be a coach on a team one game from the state championship game.

Grove, who joined the Neshaminy coaching staff on a full-time basis this year as quarterbacks and receivers coach, has been one of the vital cogs on a veteran coaching staff that has seen the Redskins capture the District One Class AAAA championship.

They will play District 11 champion



Kim Weiner/The Intelligencer

**Neshaminy's quarterbacks and receivers coach Roger Grove gives a few pointers to the players during practice on Tuesday.**

Easton at 1 p.m. Saturday at Bensalem High School for the right to go to play in the PIAA Championship game next week in Hershey.

"This has been a great group to be around," Grove said. "The kids have been so good, and they have been so easy for us to coach. It's just been an experience I'll always remember."

Grove was the head coach at Norristown for 26 years. For five of those seasons, Schmidt was one of his assistants.

### Neshaminy vs. Easton

What: PIAA Class AAAA semifinal  
When: Saturday, 1  
Where: Memorial Stadium, Bensalem

He provided letters of recommendation to Schmidt when he was going for assistant jobs at the college level.

"He's like a big brother to me," Schmidt said.

Grove's teams at Norristown were usually strong, but always seemed to have powerful squads such as Central Bucks West standing in their way within the Suburban One League National Conference.

Grove retired from Norristown after the 2002 season and had figured to be done with coaching forever. Then Schmidt gave him a call.

"I had thought about joining my brother Ken (head coach at Ephrata High School) to just help him watch film," Grove said. "But Mark gave me a chance to work in a league that I was very familiar with. And he's been great to me."

It was Schmidt who presented Grove the game ball after the District One championship win last week over North Penn. It was the first time that Grove had ever gotten that far as a coach.

"For somebody to do this for 33 years and to pour his heart and his soul into those kids, he deserved it," Schmidt said.

"It was a touching moment," Grove said. "You always feel good when a former coach of yours goes out and does something good. To be a part of it yourself and to see what is happening to this group of kids, it's just been a great thing to be around."

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# Flogel steps into leadership role for Neshaminy

*Sophomore quarterback hopes to lead Redskins to PIAA title game*

By Kevin Cooney

*The TribLiner Staff*

LANGHORNE — For weeks, the seniors would go in with the same request: Make the quarterback a captain.

"I would have them march in here from the fifth week of the season telling me Coach we want him to become a captain," Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt said. "And I kept fighting them off because I didn't want to put too much pressure on him. I wanted him to just worry about his job."

But as time passed, Schmidt began to see why his seniors were demanding that Flogel should represent his team in those mostly ceremonial functions as a captain.

And so, on Thanksgiving morning and 24 hours before the District One Class AAAA championship game, Schmidt called Flogel into the office and broke the news to him that he would be a game captain against North Penn.

"I was honored that they would give that honor to me," Flogel said. "To know that my teammates wanted that for me is something that made it really special."

"The smile he had on his face was really cool to see," Schmidt said.

Not every sophomore ends up wearing the captain's tag.

But, then again, not many sophomore quarterbacks are playing for the right to go to the PIAA championship game.

This afternoon, Flogel and the rest of the Redskins get that chance when they meet Easton in the PIAA Class AAAA East-

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ern Final at Bensalem High School's Memorial Stadium. Kickoff is scheduled for 1 p.m.

"I think we're all excited about the chance we have," Flogel said. "We're not content just getting to this point. We would like to take this as far as we can."

Flogel has been one of the bright and shining lights on a Neshaminy squad that has exceeded all expectations. He's completed more than 50 percent of his passes for 915 yards. Most impressively, his touchdown-to-interception ratio is 13-to-1.

"He's done a great job of doing everything we've asked him to do as a quarterback," Schmidt said. "And he's developed into a natural leader. He's taking charge in that huddle and the other guys know it."

He's also run for 436 yards, enough to keep people off George Coleman's back.

"When you have a kid that can pass for yards and hit the big pass and still run a 4.4 40-yard dash, that's a big thing," said Central Bucks West coach Randy Cuthbert, whose team lost to Neshaminy in the first round of the District One tournament. "Everyone in the place knows that Coleman is getting the ball. And at that point, they'll run Flogel and throw a defense totally off-balance."

Flogel will insist that taking charge of a huddle wasn't an easy process. While he was vocal during passing camps, it was not until the season progressed that everything felt right.

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## LOCAL SPORTS

## Neshaminy just gets by Easton

*Redskins face  
Pittsburgh Central  
Catholic for state title*

BY STEPHEN CORNELL

*The Intelligencer*

**BENSALEM** Neshaminy must just really enjoy tight finishes.

Despite dominating Saturday's Class AAAA state semifinal game against Easton, the Redskins never pulled away and needed a late defensive stand to preserve a 21-14 victory.

Neshaminy (1-1) advanced to play Pittsburgh Central Catholic in the PIAA state

### Football

Championship next Saturday at 5 p.m. at Hersheypark Stadium.

Pittsburgh Central Catholic (15-0) routed Bishop McDevitt, 44-0, Saturday and has won three state playoff games by a combined score of 116-3. Neshaminy has needed fourth-quarter touchdowns to win all of its postseason games.

"This is a great feeling," Neshaminy senior Georg Coleman said. "But we know we have one more game next week. We have to get back to work tomorrow."

Redskins senior Dominic Cundari intercepted a pass from Easton's Bernard Coon at the goal line on the final play of

the game to preserve the win. Two plays earlier, Easton receiver John Suozzo had dropped a sure touchdown pass in the end zone.

It didn't have to be that way. Neshaminy controlled the game from the opening kickoff and probably could have blown out the Red Rovers (13-1).

On nine offensive possessions, the Redskins drove inside Easton's 25-yard line eight times and never punted. Neshaminy scored three touchdowns, turned the ball over twice in Easton's end zone and all-state kicker Kevin Kelly missed three mid-range field goals.

The only times we were stopped was when we turned the ball over or made mis-

takes," Redskins coach Mark Schmidt said. "We have to take advantage of our opportunities. You can't give good teams second chances, or third chances."

Coleman rushed 24 times for 153 yards and caught three passes for 146 yards. In 14 games, he has 2,004 rushing yards, 28 touchdowns and 172 points.

Coleman scored on an 8-yard run in the second quarter to give Neshaminy a 7-0 lead. He scored the game-winning touchdown on a 24-yard reception from sophomore quarterback Andrew Fogel with 35 seconds in the game.

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