

# Cougars roar back to win

By Rob Parent

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Bolstered by a home-field crowd and brimming with a hard-earned late lead, Neshaminy appeared to have Downingtown East under its spell last night.

Then Pat Devlin revealed to the Redskins how much of a magician he has become.

The Cougars quarterback with the Miami scholarship offer and Pennsylvania state passing record pulled off the ultimate trick, engineering three touchdown drives in the fourth quarter to hand No. 2 Neshaminy a 45-38 defeat at aptly named Heartbreak Ridge.

"This is No. 1. Oh man, it's unbelievable," Devlin said. "That team, I mean, that's a great team. They've got size and skill ... everything. But our coaches kept telling us that we had to believe in ourselves."

Presto, change-o, that's No. 4 Downingtown East finding itself in the PIAA Class AAAA (District 1) Southeastern regional final next weekend. The Cougars will play third-ranked and top regional seed North Penn, which survived a tough 19-16 test with Central Bucks East last night.

Throw out seeds and rankings, though. The Cougars have just become the East's favorite sons. Devlin has everything to do with that after finishing with 338 yards in the air, 70 on the ground in the second half alone and four total touchdowns.

Now the Cougars move on, with confidence.

"We told them before the game, that if you want to be the champions you've got to beat the champions," Downingtown East coach Mike Matta said. "We weren't going to be a great football team until we beat the giants."

So down goes Neshaminy (10-2), last year's state runner-up that had lost just its opening game of the season to No. 1 St. Joseph's Prep. With Western favorite Bishop McDevitt having lost star running back LeSean McCoy a few weeks back with a broken ankle, the Redskins were considered by many to be a favorite for the state title.

Devlin just swiped that dream. But Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt pointed out his defense aided and abetted too much.

"They ran some great plays and we didn't stop them," said Schmidt. "We came off blocks



**Downingtown East quarterback Pat Devlin** (top) is knocked out of bounds by a Neshaminy defender. Devlin engineered three touchdowns in a 24-point fourth quarter as the Cougars rallied to top the Redskins in the District 1 Class AAAA semifinal playoff contest.

and we didn't tackle and we didn't make plays."

Neshaminy, up 38-35 with under four minutes to play, also inflicted a fatal blow on itself when a snap went over the head of punter Dennis Curran, going for a safety to bring the Cougars (11-1) to within 38-37.

Matta pointed out that before that bad snap, the Cougars had made a defensive stop when they needed one.

After Neshaminy's ensuing free punt from its 20, Downingtown East set up 1st and 10 at the Neshaminy 46 with 3:22 left.

Devlin, who had just struck for touchdown passes of 76 yards to Richie Walls and 32 yards to Leo Hamilton to resurrect his team, went to work again. But this time, he ran the ball on five of six snaps, one on fourth down.

Those rushes and a pass interference got the ball to the 4. Fullback Mike Burke (three touchdowns) got the ball to the

half-yard line, then Devlin went in from there with just 15 seconds left to play.

The celebration was already in full swing on the visitors' sideline. And oh, by the way — Downingtown East had just played a whole game with one penalty called against it.

"They played a very solid game," said Neshaminy's Doug Rosnick. "We made the plays that they didn't make."

Downingtown East	14	7	0	24	—	45
Neshaminy	7	7	14	10	—	38

DE: Burke 1 run (O'Connor kick)  
DE: Burke 12 pass from Devlin (O'Connor kick)  
DE: Jason Kinney 28 run (Curran kick)  
DE: Burke 1 run (O'Connor kick)  
N: Jason Kinney 20 pass from Fogel (Curran kick)  
N: Fogel 28 run (Curran kick)  
N: Jason Kinney 7 run (Curran kick)  
N: FG Curran 22  
DE: Walls 76 pass from Devlin (O'Connor kick)  
N: Jason Kinney 2 run (O'Connor kick)  
DE: Hamilton 32 pass from Devlin (O'Connor kick)  
DE: Safety  
DE: Devlin 1 run (Hamilton pass from Devlin)

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**Cougars ballcarrier Pat O'Connor** shakes loose from the grasp of Neshaminy's Abe Brooks after catching a short pass.