

Neshaminy exploits 2 fumbles

By Rob Parent

INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

With an appearance in the Class AAAA District 1 finals apparently in its hands, Coatesville let it all slip away last night with two huge fourth-quarter fumbles that fueled a Neshaminy resurrection and a 23-20 victory in a semifinal stunner at Coatesville.

Frustrated for much of the first three quarters and with his team in a 17-point hole as the third quarter was winding down, Neshaminy's sophomore quarterback, Andrew Fogel, answered the odds by connecting on touchdown passes of 29 and 23 yards to Jason Kinney and George Coleman to pull to 20-16.

Then, after Coatesville quarterback Jeff Cellucci let the ball slip away, the Redskins marched 55 yards on seven plays to complete the comeback and set up a district-final date at home next week-

end against Suburban One National nemesis North Penn.

But a hearing looms Monday that stems from a July 22 brawl at Central Bucks West. It could involve eight remaining charged students that include several North Penn starters, among them Knights quarterback Adam Hearn and senior wideout Eric Halberstadt.

"Hey, North Penn is going to show up with or without whoever," Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt said. "They've had that 'us against the world' attitude and you can't blame them for having that, based on what's gone on in their world."

The Knights, who defeated Neshaminy with a successful two-point conversion in overtime during the regular season to secure a three-way tie for the league title (with Pennridge), completed this last district dance with a 24-21

win over Pennridge last night.

"We didn't look at next week. We had to focus on this game," said Coleman, who erased a disappointing first half by piling up 73 rushing yards and 38 receiving yards with a touchdown in the last two quarters, stealing the spotlight away from Coatesville running back C.J. Gray.

Still, Coatesville had time to grab the lead back. But in the midst of moving the ball toward midfield, Gray fumbled it away. It was a stunning end to a game in which he added 181 rushing yards to a season total already over 2,000.

"Not much you can do about fumbles," Coatesville coach Tom Nichols said.

"We knew we had to play well and then look forward to a big game ... Pennridge or North Penn," Coleman said. "We did play well, just not at the start."

With Neshaminy drawing first blood by virtue of a 29-yard field goal by Penn State-bound kicker Kevin Kelly, Gray promptly took control. His 17-yard burst set up kicker Chris O'Connell with a game-tying boot from 23 yards.

The Red Raiders, ahead by 13-3, opened the second half with a motion penalty. But behind Gray, the Raiders promptly went 85 yards on the next four plays, capped by his 31-yard scoring trot for a 20-3 lead. The party was on.

Neshaminy	3	0	7	13	—	23
Coatesville	0	13	7	0	—	20

N: FG Kelly 29

C: FG O'Connell 23

C: Gray 45 run (O'Connell kick)

C: FG O'Connell 29

C: Gray 31 run (O'Connell kick)

N: Kinney 29 pass from Fogel (Kelly kick)

N: Coleman 23 pass from Fogel (run failed)

N: Cundari 1 run (Kelly kick)

Contact suburban staff writer Rob Parent at 610-313-8025 or rparent@phillynews.com.