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HIGH SCHOOL
Sports Saturday

PIAA CLASS AAAA DISTRICT 1 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP NESHAMINY 51, NORTH PENN 34

Redskins rout Knights

Coleman's five TDs lead way for Neshaminy.

By Rob Parent
INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

A critic would say the two best teams in District 1 last night played an almost mutually defenseless playoff game. A devotee would say North Penn and Neshaminy put on an offensive show for the ages.

As for the merely appreciative crowd at Harry Franks Stadium, host Neshaminy's 51-34 victory over North Penn in a state quarterfinal game was simply a cause to celebrate. Not only did the Redskins win the district trophy in a shoot-out with their top Suburban One National rival, but they live to play another day with a spot in the PIAA Class AAAA state semifinals.

To simply and wearily summarize, then, "It was a fun night," said Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt. "And I think the people saw a fun game."

Actually, there was almost too much action to behold, though with eight North Penn regulars missing due to either convictions or plea agreements in their ongoing rioting and assault cases stemming from a brawl one haunting night last summer, it's easy to understand Neshaminy's nearly free offensive rein.

Little did anyone but North Penn's loyal fan base realize, that wouldn't translate into an easy night for the home team at "Heartbreak Ridge."

"I thought we had a shot if we didn't make any mistakes," said North Penn coach Dick Beck. But a fumbled punt, a couple of missed PAT conversion attempts and ultimately an ill-timed fumble spelled doom for the Knights (10-3).

So did a porous defensive front line. Still, the Knights wouldn't let go of the state crown they won a year ago without a fight.

"Obviously, I'm very proud of them," said Beck. "I'm sad that we couldn't bring the whole crew here. But the kids that were here really worked their butts off."

Nonetheless, North Penn couldn't stop Neshaminy's George Coleman from scoring three touchdowns, two on the ground and one sort of through the air and ground while rushing for 100 yards — and all that was just in the first quarter.

Between breaks in Coleman's show, North Penn's rambling tandem of Peter Stoll and Shane Gallagher kept the Knights in the game.

Trailing, 3-0, on a 38-yard field goal by Neshaminy's Kevin Kelly, North Penn struck right back on an 80-yard touchdown run by Stoll. Little matter to the Redskins, who with the help of a muffed punt got to the North Penn 9 before stunning the Knights with something out of what could have been Schmidt's father's playbook.

Sophomore quarterback Andrew Flogel stepped back and hooked a pass to Jason Kinney out in the flat, and he lateraled the ball back to Coleman, who jogged around the left side en route to a 10-7 lead.

Coleman then sneaked inside for a 9-yard touchdown run and a 17-7 Neshaminy lead with 44 seconds left in the opening quarter. Cue Stoll.

Again on the first play from scrimmage, the junior juked left, slid through a would-be tackle and dashed into a wide-open space in the Neshaminy backfield. Stoll rolled 77 yards for his second score to cut the gap to 17-14.

No problem, as Jared Kinney returned the ensuing kick to the North Penn 5. From there, Coleman took a handoff and tip-toed in for a 24-14 lead and an appropriate finish to an amazing quarter.

"My line gave me great holes tonight," said Coleman.

North Penn changed the momentum in the second quarter, first stopping Neshaminy then eating up 6 minutes, 22 seconds of clock with a 14-play, 88-yard drive capped by an eight-yard TD run by Ian Carpenter.

Still, Stoll (17 carries for 286 yards, 3 TDs) was far from finished. He romped for a 42-yard touchdown with 1:59 left in the third quarter, but a blocked PAT attempt left North Penn with just a 26-24 lead.

Neshaminy answered with a seven-play, 57-yard drive finished off by a three-yard scoring scramble by Flogel and a 30-26 lead. Then after a North Penn punt, Coleman steamed 56 yards for his fourth touchdown and a 37-26 lead with 8:54 left.

Of course, it wasn't over.

Jim Levens, North Penn's backup quarterback who had zero passing yards in the first half, dropped back and threw the ball as far as he could, and Carpenter was all alone to grab it and take it in for a 73-yard touchdown.

Brandon Turner's conversion run cut Neshaminy's lead to 37-34, but Coleman would have none of North Penn's miracle bit.

He kept pushing the ball and got it to the 15 for a first down, but had a shoeless left foot. Off came Coleman, and replacement Jared Kinney promptly streaked 15 yards on the next play for a 44-34 lead.

As an appropriate encore after a North Penn fumble, Coleman then dashed in from 12 yards out. The underrated Redskins back finished his brilliant game with 30 carries for 280 yards and five touchdowns.

"There were a lot of critics out there during the week who kept saying we were going to get blown out," Gallagher said. "We wanted to show them that we're still a team to contend with."

North Penn	14	6	6	8	— 34
Neshaminy	24	0	0	27	— 51

NP – Stoll 80 run (Silvelsky kick)
N – Coleman 9 run (Kelly kick)
NP – Stoll 77 run (Silvelsky kick)
N – Coleman 5 run (Kelly kick)
NP – Carpenter 8 run (kick failed)
NP – Stoll 42 run (kick blocked)
N – Flogel 3 run (kick failed)
N – Coleman 56 run (Kelly kick)
NP – Carpenter 73 pass from Levens (Turner run)
N – Jared Kinney 15 run (Kelly kick)
N – Coleman 12 run (Kelly kick)

LINDA JOHNSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff

On his first touchdown run of the evening, Neshaminy's George Coleman (1) narrowly escapes North Penn's Alex Zebluim. Coleman's longest touchdown play covered 56 yards. The underrated Redskins back finished his brilliant game with 30 carries for 280 yards and five touchdowns.

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