

Bedesem Satisfies Hunger With Big Win Against Egan

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It's a shame Dick Bedesem can't take years off people's lives the way he last night took years off the calendar.

He wouldn't have to spend his time coaching a football team or running a Levittown restaurant, although he would probably find it impossible to give up either one.

Those in attendance could have sworn it was the fall of 1973 as Neshaminy celebrated Bedesem's return to high school coaching — not to mention its own return from semi-hapless status — by hammering Bishop Egan, 34-0.

Yes, the same Bishop Egan that was known to hit a few nails on the head itself under Bedesem, who coached there from 1957 to 1970. He then spent two high-yield seasons at Archbishop Wood and was the head coach at Villanova from 1975 to 1980, also holding college assistant jobs before and after.

But like we said, last night it was as if Dick Bedesem had never been away. In general, he was the toast of Lower Bucks County. And if Neshaminy were a town instead of a loose geographical area, in all probability he could have run for mayor.

"I didn't look at this differently than I would any opening game," he said. "I was excited and I haven't eaten all day, but that's not a change because I can never eat before a game."

"I was talking with my coaches before the game and one of them was munching on a sandwich. I was saying, 'God, I wish I could do that.' I guess it's kind of silly, huh? Here I am 52 years old . . . People say it's a kids game. Well, the kids are playing the game, but it's just as important to the adults."

"I was as excited beforehand — and I'm as emotionally drained now — as I ever was at Villanova."

The Redskins showed they can play a pretty mean game of Follow the Leader. Not once all night did they fail to show team-wide exuberation when something went right, which was often.

It appeared for a split-second that Joe Clark would break Neshaminy's first play from scrimmage for a 73-yard touchdown. Instead, he had to settle for a 24-yard gain and merely raced 37 yards for a score just three plays later.

On the next possession, the second play was a 58-yard touchdown pass from Tim Ford to Dave Weiser.

"I really like our wishbone offense," said Ford. "Good things come out of it. We can get a lot of big plays, like you saw tonight."

Under the original plans, what Neshaminy's fans would have seen was a different Ford at the controls of the offense. But Mickey Ford, Tim's brother, suffered ligament damage to his knee in the second of three pre-season scrimmages and Bedesem's staff had to make some adjustments.

No offense, Mickey, but it's hard to believe that you're very much better than Tim.

Tim's high-water mark came in the third quarter, when he ran an option play to the left and seven yards past the line made a perfect, almost-blind pitch to Dave Megahan, who negotiated the final 20 yards to a score.

"We moved the ball pretty much against everybody in the scrimmage," Bedesem said. "But it was kind of a downer when Mickey got hurt. Tim had enough to worry about just stepping in for him, but he was also concerned about Mickey's health. It was a bad situation. But when we scrimmaged La Salle last Friday, Tim had the offense back in gear."

Before anyone gets carried away, it should be noted that Egan has almost zero in the way of offense at this early juncture; also that star defensive tackle Mark Pizzo left early with an injured right wrist.

However, if Neshaminy's players were under the impression that Dick Bedesem is the coaching equivalent of The Man Upstairs, last night's game did nothing to dispel it.

"He really knows his stuff. He gets us going," Tim Ford said. "We knew he'd bring good football to Neshaminy. When he had his first team meeting, it was like he was the greatest guy we ever saw. We looked at him like we would have looked at Bear Bryant."

"We listened to everything he said. We believed in everything he said. And we knew if we could just do what he said, we'd be a winning team."

The only problem came in the locker room beforehand, when Bedesem tried to break the doomsday tension.

"They were as tight as drums," he said. "I was kind of worried. I tried to loosen them up by telling them something funny, but you know how that goes: what I told them wasn't funny. But when they came out here, the kids were certainly ready."

Egan hasn't lost a game by as many as 34 points since 1978, when Father Judge did the 40-0 honors.

Was there any special satisfaction, someone wanted to know, that the down-trodden foe was Egan? Bedesem didn't exactly leave on friendly terms.

"Really, no. I'd like to stand here and say, 'Oh, yeah, that was . . .'" Bedesem said. "But it wouldn't be true. That was a long time ago. The only important thing was that we looked decent in our opener. The opponent didn't matter. We wanted to prove that our system is viable."

"I would think we're really in sync with the kids now. They can see how they can perform if they get out there and do the things they're taught."

ELSEWHERE: Tom Colvin passed or ran for 89 yards in a 92-yard scoring drive as Bonner blanked Haverford High, 14-0. Tom Meiswich and Bill Horan got the TDs . . . Moe Cabot's 50-yard interception kept Kenrick close to Norristown, 14-6.