

Ford Driving Force for Neshaminy

By **MIKE KERN**

Daily News Sports Writer

When it comes time to select an all-suburban football squad, quarterback Tim Ford of Neshaminy probably won't get as much consideration as some of his peers. The numbers just aren't there.

But if you're talking about a most valuable player at that position, Redskins coach Dick Bedesem, who's sworn by the wishbone formation for almost two decades, feels there's nobody more deserving.

"Without that good read, and that good concentration, and above all else, that great poise he has, our offense wouldn't run like it does," Bedesem said yesterday after a 27-17 non-league win in Neshaminy's season finale at Methacton. "He has to literally read 85 to 90 percent of our offense.

"To get a youngster who can maybe throw the ball better or possibly run faster or stronger doesn't mean a whole lot if you don't have the poise. That's the key to the wishbone. And we think he does a marvelous job."

Against the Warriors (2-7-2), one of the season's biggest disappointments, Ford overcame a shaky first half to finish with 44 yards rushing on eight attempts, with three of those carries picking up first downs. He also completed two of six passes for 48 yards and a touchdown.

Not great statistics, perhaps, but since Bedesem's arrival two years ago, Ford has grown content with simply leading the Redskins (8-3) to victory.

"I like running it, even though I'd never run any kind of option since pee-wee ball," said Ford, a shifty 5-8, 160-pound senior who split the starting assignment a year ago with his older brother Mickey. "I don't mind not getting big stats. If we rack up wins, then that suits me. That's what we're out here for.

"It's nice having a lot of responsibility. We never doubted it [wishbone's effectiveness]. It's so tough to defend once we get it down and start to click. Then it just becomes a matter of us blocking the right people and reading the right keys.

"I remember the first day Coach Bedesem talked to us. We called him Bear Bryant, because when he walked in the room it was silent. We listened to every word. He told us if we did what he said, we'd be a good team."

In 1983, the year before Bedesem arrived, the Redskins won only twice. Last fall, they won seven games. And in each of the past two seasons, they've finished second to Pennsbury in the always rugged Suburban One National Conference.

"You never stop learning with this offense," said Ford, "because teams are always trying new things to stop it. So we have to counter that. Like if they string us out on the perimeter, then we have to make them respect our middle."

Surprisingly, Neshaminy trailed at halftime, 10-7. In large part, that was because of a pair of Redskin fumbles deep in Methacton territory. And after Ford connected with Lou Patella for a 25-yard score to make it 14-10, the Warriors rallied to take the lead by driving 80 yards in 12 plays.

But fullback Bill Clemens's 44-yard burst off left tackle late in the third period put Neshaminy back in front for good, 21-17. Midway through the fourth quarter, Clemens (12 carries, 91 yards) provided the insurance TD from 4 yards out.

Halfback Jim Dougherty gained 67 yards in 17 rushes, completed a 52-yard pass and also ran back the second-half kickoff 69 yards to set the stage for the Redskins' comeback. Dan Sathouese had three of Neshaminy's five interceptions.

"I guess we were just lax in the first half," said Ford. "Coach told us at halftime that we had too much pride to just sit there and blow a good season. Of course, he told us the same thing before the game, but we didn't listen.

"We just decided to go out winners. This is the best record at the school since the mid-70s, so that's something. Since he [Bedesem] came, I sensed we were going to be OK."

Once Bedesem got a good look at Ford's abilities, the feeling was no doubt mutual.

SUBURBIA: Penn Wood clinched a tie with Glen Mills for first place in the Delaware Valley League by beating Interboro, 22-6. **Ray McGuire**, who scored Interboro's only touchdown on a 1-yard run, went over the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the season ... Wissahickon's **Dave White** scored on TD runs of 76 and 64 yards, but it wasn't enough as Lansdale Catholic rallied for a 28-17 non-league victory ... **Jon Johnson's** second TD of the game, a 48-yard run with 2:14 left, was the difference in Upper Darby's 27-22 win over Marple-Newtown.