

Neshaminy Set For Showdown With Pennsbury

Glancing ahead and peaking back ... or, trying to sort out another weekend of suburban high school football.

At Neshaminy High, the title chase is back.

The Redskins ambushed Abington, 30-12 Saturday to set up a showdown Friday night with Pennsbury (which shockingly fell to Bensalem, 9-0) for the Suburban One National championship.

"We're more hungry this year," said halfback **Dave Megahan**, who scored all four Redskin touchdowns,

three via the rush and one on a pass from **Mickey Ford**.

"In fact, after Pennsbury lost, we may have been keyed up too much for this one. That's why we started off poorly. It took us a while to regain our

composure, because we knew how much this meant."

"Now, for the first time in I don't know how many years, we have a chance to win something."

Neshaminy (7-2), which trailed only 12-7 at intermission despite running just 12 plays from scrimmage, rebounded with 23 second-half points to set up a shot at an outright championship for first-year coach **Dick Bedesem**, who, as expected, has steered the program to a quick about-face.

"I read the riot act to them before the game," said Bedesem. "No way we could afford to look ahead. With kids, the mental approach is the name of the game. Once you get them going in the right direction mentally, everything else seems to pop into place."

Five weeks ago, Chester's starting tailback, junior **Darryl Chavis**, went down with an injury. In stepped sophomore **Anthony McClain**, and, heading into last week's game, all he'd done was rush for more than 400 yards and 11 touchdowns. Last week, he became the first Clipper ever to be honored by the Maxwell Club. So you'd expect Chester's opponents to

Mike Kern's Suburban Top 10

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| 1. Owen J. Roberts | (9-0) |
| (tie) Central Bucks West | (8-0) |
| 3. Central Bucks East | (8-0) |
| 4. Ridley | (8-0) |
| 5. Souderton | (8-1) |
| 6. North Penn | (6-1) |
| 7. Neshaminy | (7-2) |
| 8. Abington | (7-2) |
| 9. Pennsbury | (7-2) |
| 10. Downingtown | (7-2) |
- Under Consideration: Archbishop Kennedy (8-0-1), Chester (7-2), Upper Merion (7-2), Strath Haven (7-2), Upper Perkiomen (7-3).

gear up for a "Big Mac" attack.

That doesn't mean, however, that the Clippers' offense is one-dimensional. As quarterback **Willard Cooper** proved Saturday in a pivotal 13-0 Del Val win over visiting Penn Wood, the Clippers are quite capable of beating you through the air as well.

"It doesn't matter who gets the ink," said Cooper, who completed 14 of 31 passes for 203 yards and two touchdowns (he also was intercepted twice). "We're all in this together. I think it's great that Anthony's been getting so much attention. He deserves it for the job he's done filling in for Darryl. But we knew he could do it. That's what team confidence is all about."

"When Darryl got hurt, I knew I'd have to take over more responsibility. But that went for everyone, not just me. Each of us had to pull a little more until Anthony felt comfortable back there."

Comfortable? McClain, a powerful 5-10, 185-pounder, looks as if he's been there all his life. He burned the Patriots for 135 yards on 28 carries, bringing his five-game total to 637 yards on 126 attempts. Not too shabby for a midseason replacement.

"We don't call him a sophomore anymore," said Clippers coach **Joe Carroll**. "The other kids have sort of taken him under their belt, brought him along."

They've brought him all the way to the brink of a title, which would be the school's first since 1978, the year before Carroll took over. Chester and Penn Wood are 7-2, 4-1 in the Del Val with one league game remaining. Chester travels to Chester, while the Pats draw tougher Academy Park, also on the road. Unless one falls, they'll share the crown.

Not to be lost in all the back-slapping was the effort of Chester's defense, which didn't permit Penn Wood to penetrate its 30-yard line. Leading the way for that unit were **Tryone Gordon**, **Al Payne** and **Kevin Carter**. **Sheldon Smith** picked off two passes and **James King** one, which gave him 11 for the year, one shy of the school record.

"It's been a while since we've been in a position like this, but we can't lose sight of the fact that we've still got one to go," said Carroll. "These kids have made a commitment to the program and the school, and that loyalty has been evident in their performance."

"We definitely have the feeling that maybe it's our turn for a change. Last year we lost four games by one point, and even though we finished 17, we won four of our last five. So coming back, we had a good outlook about that this group could accomplish."

So far, it hasn't let him down.

Top 10: The bottom half took a pounding, with No. 5 Pennsbury, No. 6 North Penn, No. 7 Abington and No. 10 Methacton all losing. Arch Bishop Kennedy, ranked ninth, had



Inquirer photo

New coach Dick Bedesem has revived Neshaminy

to score a touchdown and two-point conversion to force a tie with Lansdale Catholic. Toughest loss to figure was Methacton's. The Warriors appeared to be headed toward another Suburban One American title, but Plymouth-Whitemarsh laid waste to them Saturday, 26-6. So with one league game left, they remained tied with Upper Merion (which Methacton beat a week ago, 17-14).

Preview Dept: Aside from Pennsbury-Neshaminy, there also are two other good ones on tap this weekend.

If unbeaten Bux-Mont rivals Central Bucks West and Central Bucks East plan to meet on Thanksgiving with all the marbles riding, each has to hurdle a formidable obstacle this Friday. West, which finally surrendered a pair of touchdowns against Upper Perkiomen after posting seven straight shutouts, travels to North Penn. The defending champion Knights are out of the race with two league losses, but they should give West all it can handle. Plus, they'll be out to avenge a tough three-point loss from last fall.

East, meanwhile, hosts Souderton. With a victory, the visiting Indians, whose only loss was to West, can keep alive their hopes of winning at least a share of the title. In other words, it's still anybody's crown to win — or lose.

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