

Bedesem leads team to a title shot

Some things that happened and some that didn't over the weekend in scholastic football:

The ironic twists that have accompanied Dick Bedesem's return to coaching on the scholastic level never seem to end.

Bedesem coached Villanova until 1981, when the university shut down its football program, which has since been reinstated. Bedesem became the Neshaminy coach this season. In its opener, Neshaminy clobbered Bishop Egan, 34-0, giving Bedesem a victory over a school where he established himself as a premier coach in the 1960s. While Bedesem was at Egan, Neshaminy was the only opponent that consistently beat his teams.

During that same era, Neshaminy and Pennsbury were developing one of the area's most intense rivalries, which reached its apex in 1971 when both teams, unbeaten, played before a crowd estimated at 20,000.

Guess what? Those two Lower Bucks County schools will get together Friday night at Neshaminy to decide the Suburban One League National Division championship.

"This is what it's all about," Bedesem said yesterday. "This is everything a coach and his players could ask for ... a game to decide a championship at the end of the season. And it's a natural, because Neshaminy and Pennsbury used to go at each other every year."

There was little reason to believe that the game would be of such magnitude before the weekend started. But Pennsbury (7-2 overall, 5-1 conference) was stunned by lowly Bensalem, 9-0, Friday, and Neshaminy (7-2, 5-1) overcame a 12-0 deficit to thump Abington (7-2, 4-2), 30-12, Saturday.

"Right now, I think Neshaminy has the best offense in District 1," Norris-town coach Roger Grove said.

That offense, which has averaged 27 points a game in the last six, develops out of the wishbone, which Bedesem has adhered to throughout

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his coaching career. And Bedesem has the talent at his disposal to make the wishbone purr like a European sports car.

Running backs Earl Brown (closing in on 1,000 yards) and Dave Megahan, who scored four touchdowns in the Abington game, give quarterback Tim Ford two excellent choices when he pitches the ball. When Ford opts to pass, he has a superb receiver in Michael Downs. When Ford needs a breather, his older brother Mickey fills in without missing a beat.

As you might imagine, all this can be very confusing for a defense.

"The key to the wishbone is having a quarterback who can read defenses and keep his composure," Bedesem said. "And with Tim and Mickey, I have a beautiful situation, because both do it well. Earl Brown is a Division I prospect, and Michael Downs might be the best receiver in the league."

Meanwhile, Bedesem is thoroughly enjoying his return to high school football.

"The kids are just fantastic," he said. "They hang on every word you say. I can honestly say it's the finest group I've ever been associated with. I remember after our third win, we got on the bus after the game and a couple of our kids were crying. We didn't understand why. Then one of the players said they were crying because they had never won three games before."

If the Redskins win Friday, Bedesem may have to order a case of Kleenex.

Sidetracked. Methacton (5-3-1, 5-1) had its second straight Suburban One American banner more than halfway up the flagpole after upset-

ting Upper Merion, 17-14, on Oct. 26. Then along came Plymouth-Whitemarsh, the area's most unpredictable team, to knock off the Warriors, 28-6, Saturday. Now Methacton needs a win over torrid Upper Dublin on Saturday to grab at least a share of the title. "It's the worst we've played in three, four years," said Methacton coach George Marinkov. "It's a shame, but the whole team was flat. And P-W has a good club."

P-W (5-4) has a strange club, that's for certain. The Colonials have defeated Norristown (6-3), Pennsbury (7-2) and Methacton, but have lost to lesser teams.

"We [the coaching staff] joke about which team will show up each week," said P-W coach Reece Whitley, who added that he was undecided about whether he would return next year. "This team's just tough to figure."

Nobody's perfect. Central Bucks West (8-0) beat Upper Perkiomen, 27-14, Friday night but had its seven-game shutout streak ended when Matt Duka scored in the second quarter.

"There were a lot of blank stares at halftime," Bucks coach Mike Pettine said. "The players look stunned. This sounds crazy, but I prefer that the shutout streak is over so we can just get on with the business of winning."

Weekend heroes. Archbishop Kennedy's Jim Borkowski made a remarkable TD catch and followed with another for a two-point conversion in the final 30 seconds Friday to give the Saints (8-0-1, 5-0-1) a 22-22 tie with Lansdale Catholic (6-1-2, 5-0-1) and a share of the Bicentennial League title. ... Dobbins running back Calvin Jones ran for 242 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries in a 36-18 win over Germantown on Friday ... North Catholic linebacker Tom Price blocked a punt to set up

the Falcons' first score in Saturday's 30-0 rout over defending Catholic League champ Father Judge. ... Chester quarterback Willard Cooper completed 14 of 31 passes for 202 yards and two touchdowns in the Clippers' 13-0 win over Penn Wood on Saturday.

Playoff watch. The top four teams in both the Catholic League's Northern and Southern Divisions advance to the playoffs. Here's how they line up with one week to go. The remaining opponent is in parentheses: Northern — North, 6-1 (Ryan); Ryan, 6-1 (North); Judge, 5-2 (Dougherty); Dougherty, 4-3 (Judge); McDevitt, 4-3 (Egan). Southern — Carroll, 6-0 (St. James); Bonner, 5-1 (O'Hara); St. Joseph's Prep, 3-2-1 (Neumann); West Catholic, 3-3 (Roman); O'Hara, 3-3 (Bonner); St. James, 2-3-1 (Carroll).