

Chaump is hoping to help Neshaminy make history

"A year ago, he was coaching junior high school football, on the rebound from several years as a varsity coach at Morrisville and now defunct Neshaminy Maple Point.

But today, John Chaump heads one of the top football programs in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Chaump's Neshaminy Redskins, ranked by the Inquirer as the area's No. 3 team, will be the next team to try to end Central Bucks West's winning streak, which stands at 37 games. Neshaminy, 5-0 and coming off a 42-6 thrashing of North Penn, will play host to West at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

"They have an excellent team," Chaump said. "But whenever we take the field, we feel we have a good chance of winning."

Many football observers wondered what Neshaminy's chances of winning this year would be, especially after Dick Bedesem, who in two years at the Langhorne school had brought back football respectability, left to become head coach at Delaware Valley College. But under Chaump, the Redskins haven't missed a beat, going undefeated against competition that included Abington, Downingtown, Upper Merion and Central Bucks East.

"I didn't really feel any pressure replacing Dick," Chaump said. "He left a good program, a good foundation. I knew most of the kids coming back, because I had them in junior high ball at Neshaminy. So I was comfortable about the situation."

Able to retain five of Bedesem's assistant coaches and having back the team's starting quarterback, halfback and fullback, Chaump kept the old coach's wishbone offense intact.

"It's a great offense if you have the people who can execute it," Chaump said. "And we had the people to execute it."

If the team can execute it Friday, Neshaminy could make history.

M. G. Missanelli on high schools

town, the defending champion of the American Conference's Liberty Division.

Part of the reason for the Hatters' resurgence has been Chris Horstman, a 6-foot, 175-pound junior tailback. Horstman, nicknamed "The Horse" by his teammates, has rushed for 629 yards and has scored 8 touchdowns this season.

Against Quakertown, he rushed 28 times for 160 yards, and carried the ball 13 straight times on one series.

Horstman, whose family moved to the Hatboro-Horsham School District two years ago because of a job transfer, played sparingly last season before becoming academically ineligible. But this year, he has given the Hatters a much-needed shot in the arm.

"I think the new environment had a lot to do with his academic troubles last year," said Hatboro-Horsham coach Dennis Steiny. "He's much more comfortable this year — a little more stable."

"It's really nice to have a kid the caliber of Chris transfer into your district. It doesn't happen very often."

Ridley lights

Beginning next season, fans will be able to view Ridley High's home football games under a much different light.

Night football will return to Ridley upon the installation of lights at Marion Field. The lights were approved last spring by the Ridley School Board as part of a capital improvement plan in the district.

Ridley has not played a night football game since 1959, when it defeated Norristown at Bensalem Field.

Bob Wurst, an assistant football coach at Bensalem for the last five years, has resigned over what he called "philosophical differences" with head football coach Al Black.

"I really don't see the point in going into anything specific," Wurst said. "A lot has been said about the situation [at Bensalem], and I think it would be in the best interests of the kids to let it ride."

Wurst, a guidance counselor in the Bensalem School District, was the only assistant retained by Black from last year's coaching staff.

On Friday evening, Bensalem lost its third game in four starts this year, 41-0, to Norristown.

Ervin's return

Although he is perfectly happy as coach and general manager of the Philadelphia Aces of the United States Basketball League, Lefty Ervin longed for a basketball-related winter.

So now he's back, as Penn Charter High's new basketball coach.

"Last winter, I was going to basketball games every chance I got," Ervin said. "I went to a St. Joe's game one night and ran into Fran Dunphy [the La Salle University assistant]. He said, 'What are you doing here? You need a fix?'"

"And that was about the size of it. I'm a basketball junkie always looking for a fix."

Ervin will remain with the Aces, because the high school season and the league's summer season do not conflict, and also because he is a part owner of the Aces.

Will the transition from coaching professionals to coaching high schoolers be difficult for Ervin?

"Basketball is basketball," he said. "There's not much difference in teaching the game."