

Determined Ghosts rally to vanquish Redskins

By Kurt Pflizer
Special to The Inquirer

With a little more than 2 minutes left in their 18-13 Suburban One victory over previously unbeaten Neshaminy Saturday, it looked as if the Abington Ghosts were about to fall victim to overconfidence, caution, imprudence and a controversial penalty.

Only a furious comeback effort — capped by Abington senior fullback Larry Waugh scoring on a 4-yard run with 59 seconds left in the game — kept the Ghosts (4-0, 1-0 in the league) from their first loss of the year. Neshaminy dropped to 3-1, 0-1.

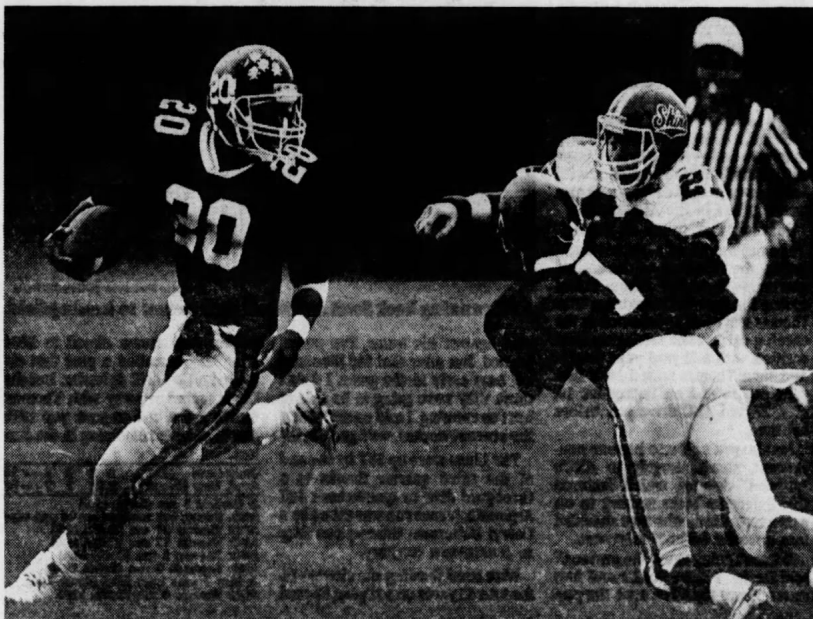
Abington raced out to a 12-0 lead in the first half on the rushing of Waugh (148 yards) and senior running back Chris Roberts (37 yards). Waugh bulled for both touchdowns; Roberts set up the second score with a 36-yard option pass to junior wide receiver Ted Ferguson.

In the meantime, the Ghosts' defense had held the mighty Neshaminy offense to a mere 54 yards rushing.

But the Ghosts came out in the third quarter playing like they intended to sit on their lead and run out the clock.

"We came out with a 12-point lead and we just wanted to get the first downs and run the clock down. Plus we had poor field position most of the second half," said Abington head coach Doug Moister.

The Ghosts failed to get a first down in the third quarter, hampered by penalties and by a swarming, inspired Redskins defense. Halfway through the period, the 'Skins took over at their 30-yard line and finally got their offense untracked. Sophomore quarterback Bill Vergantino



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Abington's Chris Roberts looks for an opening as teammate Steve Johnson (1) throws a block.

Abington 18 Neshaminy 13

darted for 18 yards and senior wide receiver-running back Jim Dougherty ran for 11 more.

A personal foul against Abington then gave the Redskins a first-and-goal at the Ghosts' 8, instead of fourth-and-6 from the Ghosts' 22. Three plays later, the 'Skins were at the 5, thanks partly to the slick field. Then, with 51 seconds left in the quarter, Vergantino tossed a pass to Dougherty, who broke a tackle and slipped into the end zone. Senior kicker Pat Jagers added the extra point to close Abington's lead to 12-7.

Abington gained only four yards on its next possession, allowing the 'Skins to mount another drive, this

one an eight-play affair that started at the Ghosts' 47-yard line and ended at the Ghosts' 5 when Vergantino fumbled and Abington recovered.

But again, the Ghosts could not move the ball. With fourth-and-5 from their 9-yard line, they had a choice: punt the ball or fall on it in the end zone for a safety.

"I blew that one," said Moister. "We should have taken a safety and then we could have kicked it deeper into their territory."

The Ghosts punted and the Redskins took over at the Abington 36-yard line. Three plays lost five yards leaving Neshaminy with a fourth-and-15 situation. Abington junior defensive back Marshall Roberts (Chris Roberts' cousin) was whistled for pass interference when he knocked down a pass intended for Redskin senior tight end Brett Canimore.

"That was a terrible call," said Moister. "Marshall made a clean

block."

The penalty gave Neshaminy a first down at the Abington 25-yard line. A pass from Vergantino to senior tight end Rob Weiser moved the ball to the 4, and on the next play, junior running back Tom Knox swept around left end to put the Redskins ahead 13-12 with 2:37 remaining.

Fortunately for the home Abington crowd, it took the Ghosts less than a minute to snap out of their lethargy. Chris Roberts returned the kickoff 30 yards to the Redskins' 48. Ghost junior quarterback Jeff Hack passed 14 yards to senior tight end Dan Helm, and Waugh then bulled for carries of 11, 8, 11, 3, 3 and 4 yards for the winning score.

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|-----------|---|---|---|---|------|
| Neshaminy | 0 | 0 | 7 | 6 | — 13 |
| Abington | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | — 18 |

A: Waugh 1 run (kick failed)

A: Waugh 3 run (run failed)

N: Dougherty 4 pass from Vergantino (Jagers kick)

N: Knox 4 run (run failed)

A: Waugh 4 run (run failed)