

Kevin Cooneys Fearless Forecast

There's an old saying about if you want to make God laugh, start making a foolproof plan.

For sports writers, the same kind of thing goes for prediction columns. After all, we can watch the game in a certain way and think that we have things figured out. That eventually will lead to the inevitable nothing goes the way it was planned game that has coaches laughing their heads off on Saturday morning.

It is with those words of caution that this analysis of the District One Class AAAA semifinal between Neshaminy and Garnet Valley is offered. After all, everybody and his brother is probably looking at the defensive stats and expecting a score along the lines of 6-3 or something. Usually, that's when 42-35 breaks out.

But there are some things that seem pretty concrete when analyzing this game. Anyone who expects this to be a walk in the park for the Redskins en route to an eventual showdown against North Penn next weekend for the District One title is sadly mistaken. Those who expect the Jaguars to make mincemeat out of the Redskins are equally as flawed in their logic.

No, this is the kind of matchup on paper that we should want and expect all of them in late November to turn into. Two good defenses ranked second and third in District One in points yielded playing each other on equal footing with enough offensive weapons around to add some spice to the recipe.

This idea that some believe that Garnet Valley is some kind of a lightweight that will eventually fold under the Class AAAA big-game spotlight, is ill-based. Remember that the Jaguars have players who have been part of a Class AAA state championship game last season against Thomas Jefferson. If it has'nt happened yet, it aint going to happen now.

That being said, there are some things to look for when breaking this game down and trying to find an eventual winner.

OFFENSIVE SIZE AND SPEED

One thing that became evident in the second half of last week's Pennsbury-Garnet Valley game was that the Jaguars were being worn down by the Falcons offensive line. They also seemed to have trouble with the speed of

Pennsbury back Dante Devine late in the game after the defensive line got worn down.

It wouldn't surprise me if Mark Schmidt literally just keeps going with the running game all night and trying to pound it down the Jaguars throats. There was a trend last week late that appeared to work, and that's one thing that the Neshaminy coaching staff is great at picking up on film.

KEYSERS KNEE

People around the Garnet Valley program insisted last week after the Pennsbury game that running back Tim Keyser's knee injury the mysterious one that kept him out against Pennridge in the opening round limited him to roughly 60-75 percent efficiency. While some doubt that assertion, what seems indisputable is the fact that seven days should help it heal a little more.

If Keyser is 100 percent, then the Redskins challenge just got a whole lot tougher. If you think he's going to be substantially less than that, Neshaminy has to have the edge when you compare backfields with Quilan Arnold and Bryan Dean.

TURNOVERS

This is the area that should concern the Redskins most. Last week, they turned the ball over twice against Ridley. Neither one of them hurt that much in a 27-3 win over the Green Raiders, because their defense got the ball right back. But if you hand the ball away on the road in the postseason, odds are you are going home.

The only reason that the Jaguars are here this week is because they cashed in twice on Pennsbury's turnovers and other mistakes. They will make you pay for your mistakes. The Redskins have zero chance at Garnet Valley if they are a minus on the turnover scale.

THE PICK

Usually, the way to pick these games is to go with the team that has the ultimate strength edge. I think offensively, these teams are just about even. I think Garnet Valley's defense is good. I think Neshaminy's defense has been outstanding. The first team to score will win, and I like the Redskins in a test of wills to head to the District One final against North Penn next week.

NESHAMINY 14, GARNET VALLEY 7

November 21, 2008 11:33 AM

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/108-11212008-1625529.html>