

# Shirey injury takes toll on Neshaminy

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WARMINSTER Neshaminy senior lineman Dan Shirey certainly did not end his high school football career the way he wanted.

With 5 minutes, 8 seconds left in the third quarter Friday, the Redskins were trailing by just seven points when Shirey went down with a knee injury.

It was heartbreaking, he said.

What had been a tense, defensive struggle soon turned into dominance for opponent North Penn, as the Knights eventually rolled to a 28-0 victory over the Redskins in the PIAA District One Class AAAA championship game held Friday night at a jammed Claude Lodge Field.

The Knights (14-0) await the winner of today's game between George Washington and Bethlehem Liberty to play in the Eastern final next week. For the Redskins (12-2), the season is over following its first appearance in the district final since 2004.

North Penn was up, 7-0, when Shirey had to be helped off the field. It may never be known whether the Redskins would have been able to stage a comeback with Shirey in there, but things did not go well for them after he was gone.

I think it was more an emotional change to the team, said Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt. He is such a winner. You definitely felt a little air come out of us when it happened.

... But I'm proud that every kid played hard until the end.

The way Shirey described it afterward, he saw a guard on North Penn's offensive line pulling, and he dashed over to take him on. There was a tackle, then a hit on the outside of his left knee.

I had already had planted my leg in the ground, so, when he hit me, the leg kind of bent, said Shirey.

The diagnosis at the game was that Shirey had hurt his medial collateral ligament (MCL). He will have to get the knee examined to see if the MCL is sprained or torn.

An icepack was taped to Shirey's knee, and he was given crutches so he was able to stand and watch the rest of the game from the sidelines. What he saw was not good news for his team.

After the game, Shirey was still able to lead the final team huddle in a chant when it broke up, and he attended meetings of his position coaches.

But then, while the others began walking, Tennent athletic director Lou Pacchioli was there in a cart to take him off the field. Shirey made a brief stop at the field's entrance to see his mother before being carted up the hill to take his Neshaminy uniform off for the last time.

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