

Knights the best there is

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By: Christiaan DeFranco

WARMINSTER They had already been force-fed a bitter pill. They were going to lose. But the Neshaminy Redskins sure didn't want to get shut out.

Not that, at least. Not in this game. Not by this team.

Down by four touchdowns with the final seconds ticking off, coach Mark Schmidt's Redskins kept throwing for the end zone. But, after stalling the clock with one incompletion after another, Neshaminy could no longer hold off the inevitable a 28-0 North Penn victory for the district championship.

Even if Neshaminy had gotten on the board, it wouldn't have mattered. The statement had already been made.

No team in District 1 even comes close to North Penn.

Period.

After Neshaminy marched down the field on its opening possession, only to come up empty, the Knights controlled the game.

Aside from North Penn, Neshaminy was the best this district had to offer and one of the best in the state and the Knights dominated.

Neshaminy's offense was averaging nearly 28 points entering Friday's district final. And Neshaminy was the one who was used to doing the shutting out the Redskins blanked four teams this year. But it was North Penn who put up 28, North Penn who pitched a no-no.

Rumor is, some team from out West might be able to beat the Knights. Anyone who was at William Tennent Friday night would find that hard to believe.

North Penn shut out Neshaminy.

The Knights shut out the team that mercy-ruled them in last year's district quarterfinals, the team that beat them twice last year by a combined score of 66-7.

"We learned a lot from that district loss last year," North Penn coach Dick Beck said. "Tonight we didn't panic, we were very patient ... and our offensive line took the challenge."

Neshaminy was supposed to have one of the biggest, strongest and most skillful fronts in the region and Beck said it was the best he'd seen all season yet North Penn, focused and fundamentally sound, consistently won in the trenches.

Neshaminy's offense? What offense? Not against North Penn's front seven and glue-like secondary.

Neshaminy's 'D'? It couldn't stop Ronnie Akins or Tyler Smith or, in fact, anybody the Knights had to offer.

North Penn is the king of this district. Neshaminy the Knights' old nemesis is miles behind.

"We would have been happy to to win (the district) against anybody," Beck said. "It's gratifying against Neshaminy because we know what a good team they are."

Mm-hmm.

A touchdown, or even a field goal, in the final seconds and, let's face it, it was some old-fashioned gamesmanship on the part Neshaminy wouldn't have masked the beating North Penn had dealt the 'Skins. 28-0 or 28-7, either way it's a rout.

But a shutout sure made it sweeter.

E-mail Christiaan DeFranco at cdefranco@thereporteronline.com. Check out his blog directly at cdsportsnotebook.blogspot.com, or access it through The Reporter website at thereporteronline.com.

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