



KEVIN COOKE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pennsbury's Dante Devine (right) tries to elude a tackle from Neshaminy's Kevin McGee during the Falcons' overtime victory on Friday night. The win clinched the Suburban One League National Conference championship for the Falcons.

Pennsbury works OT

The Falcons overcame Neshaminy's second-half rally to clinch SOL National crown.

By KEVIN COONEY
STAFF WRITER

FAIRLESS HILLS — The pain from that walk to the bus never really left Eric Williams. It stayed there the entire calendar year, driving every workout through the year.

"I remember having tears in my eyes after that Neshaminy game last year," said Williams, the senior defensive back and wide receiver for Pennsbury. "But the one thing that kept us going was the idea that we would have them at our place and we would have to be ready for them."

In the blink of an eye and the deflection of a pass, Williams and the Falcons freed themselves from their torment and gave themselves a huge boost of playoff life.

It was Williams' deflection of a Charlie Marterella's pass on fourth-and-goal in overtime that secured Pennsbury's first Suburban One League outright championship since 1993 with a 27-20 victory over the Redskins before a frantic crowd at Falcon Field.

"It's a big win for all of us," said quarterback Brandon Pepper, who scrambled for three touchdowns, including the game-winner in the first overtime. "We found a way to get the job done."

The Falcons (9-1, 6-1 SOL) will finish as the second seed in the District One Class AAAA bracket and will enjoy home

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— Eric Williams,
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Neshaminy

field advantage for every playoff game up until the district final at a neutral site.

"Obviously, it's a big moment for our kids," Pennsbury coach Galen Snyder said. "It was a really big win."

For Neshaminy, the loss was disappointing on a lot of different levels. The Redskins (8-2, 5-2 SOL) had chance after chance to get through for the victory after falling behind 20-7 early in the third.

"I'm proud of the way that our guys battled, but we had so many chances to win this game and that's really upsetting," Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt said.

Pennsbury appeared ready to dominate the game from the start, taking advantage of a muffed Neshaminy punt return

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to score on a Dante Devine 1-yard touchdown run.

Pennsbury added another score midway through the second quarter on a Pepper 1-yard touchdown run that capped an eight-play, 62-yard drive.

That margin stuck through the end of the half, but the Redskins climbed back into it midway through the third when — after a Pennsbury muffed punt — Bryan Dean scored from 2 yards out.

Pepper ended the next Pennsbury drive with another 1-yard score to build the lead to 20-7. (The extra point was no good.) But that's when Neshaminy began to climb back in.

After a pass interference penalty helped keep a drive alive early in the fourth quarter, Dean swept in from 5 yards out to make it 20-14 with nine minutes to play.

On Neshaminy's next series, Brian Titus found a streaking Ricky Williams down the left sidelines. Williams made two moves, broke free and was gone for an 85-yard touchdown run that tied the game with 6:27 left. However, another special teams mistake on a false start eventually forced a mixed extra point, and the score remained tied.

"We knew that we couldn't let it get us down," Eric Williams said. "We had to keep fighting."

Neshaminy got a final crack at the win, but Ricky Domico's 35-yard field-goal attempt with 10 seconds remaining fell wide right and short. The game went to overtime, where two Neshaminy personal foul penalties helped set the stage for Pepper's last dive.

Eric Williams added the exclamation point when he knocked down the pass to Ricky Williams on fourth down.

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