

High Schools

District 1 Class AAAA Football Semifinal: *Ridley 27, Neshaminy 7*

Green Raiders roll by Redskins

By Rick O'Brien
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Andrew Hodges was out to deliver a message — to doubters of the Ridley football program and critics of the Central League.

"A lot of people think the Central League isn't as tough as the Suburban One League," Hodges said. "It really motivated me to run hard and play hard."

Hodges and the second-seeded Green Raiders made a big-time statement last night, handing third-seeded and Suburban One League National Conference power Neshaminy a 27-7 defeat in a PIAA District 1 Class AAAA semifinal playoff game at Phil Mariott Field.

The 6-foot, 200-pound Hodges carried 24 times for 124 yards and two touchdowns. At linebacker, he notched six tackles for a defense that held the visiting Redskins to 163 total yards and forced four turnovers.

"Andrew always shows up on game night," Ridley coach John Waller said. "You never have to doubt that he's going to play well."

The Green Raiders earned a berth in the district championship game for the second year in a row. They will play fifth-seeded West Chester Henderson, a 36-24 winner last night over eighth-seeded Downingtown West, for the title Friday night at a site and time to be determined.

"Ever since we lost to Pennsbury [in last year's district final], the kids have had a great desire to make it back," Waller said. "Hopefully, this time, we can take it a step further."

Ridley, 12-0 and ranked No. 1 in Southeastern Pennsylvania by The Inquirer, outgained the third-ranked Redskins, 337-163.

Raiders quarterback Steve Egoe, who sat out last football season to concentrate on bas-

ketball, completed 15 of 20 passes for 203 yards and a score.

"He is so calm through everything," Hodges said of his teammate and close friend. "I have all the faith in the world in him."

At the start of the second half, the undefeated Green Raiders, who have won three playoff games by a combined score of 94-27, marched 60 yards on 12 plays and took a commanding 20-0 lead on a 1-yard TD plunge by Hodges.

After Neshaminy (11-2) made it 20-7 late in the third quarter on a 5-yard TD pass from Justin Kinney (11 for 18, 63 yards) to Gary Renson, Ridley responded with a nine-play, 82-yard drive. It was capped by Egoe's 11-yard scoring toss to Steve Gregg.

The Green Raiders' defense was sparked by Hodges, linebacker Greg Marenc (eight tackles) and defensive back



BOB WILLIAMS / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Ridley's Andrew Hodges scores the first touchdown of the game on a 12-yard run in the first quarter, eluding a diving Gary Rensen (4) of Neshaminy. Ridley will next face Henderson.

Matt Tasconi (fumble recovery, interception).

In the second quarter, the hosts increased their lead to 13-0 when Egoe delivered a 36-yard TD toss to Jake Cahill. Cahill raced down the left sideline, gained a few steps on a defender, and ran under Egoe's perfectly-placed pass.

Neshaminy tailback Jason Ulmer, limited to 56 yards on

12 carries, ended the season with 1,851 rushing yards.

Neshaminy	0	0	0	0	—	7
Ridley	7	6	7	7	—	27

R: Hodges 12 run (Jysaker kick)
R: Cahill 36 pass from Egoe (kick blocked)
R: Hodges 1 run (Jysaker kick)
N: Renson 5 pass from Kinney (Joffries kick)
R: Gregg 11 pass from Egoe (Jysaker kick)

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