

Neshaminy Meets Its Match

Cedar Cliff Defense Renders Redskins Powerless on Offense

By Mike Kern

Daily News Sports Writer

After his team was smothered by Cedar Cliff, 24-0, in the first round of the inaugural PIAA Class AAAA football playoffs, Neshaminy coach John Chaump stated the obvious.

"We just got on the wrong side of this one," Chaump said of Saturday's loss in front of 5,000 at Allentown's Crum Stadium. "We couldn't do anything, no two ways about it. Sometimes, you meet a better team, and that's all there is to it. If we had lost to a team I felt we were better than, then I'd walk off with my head down. But that's not what happened. They really did a great job on us.

"We could have practiced forever, and I don't think it would have made much of a difference."

Chaump probably is right.

Neshaminy (11-1) did not manage to move the first-down chains once. In fact, the Redskins ran just 32 plays (to Cedar Cliff's 58), which resulted in minus-19 yards of total offense. They were 0-for-8 passing with two interceptions, one of which was returned for a touchdown.

It certainly was an ugly way to close out a splendid season.

But if Neshaminy had a soft spot, it was its passing game. Chaump had alternated two quarterbacks all season, senior Dan McClave and junior James Franklin. But the Redskins had to play catch-up in only two games, both against relatively weak opponents. When they fell behind in this one, they simply didn't have the proper tools to mount a rally. Cedar Cliff (14-0), especially in the early stages, stuck nine guys up close to the line of scrimmage and pretty much dared Neshaminy to air it out.

A case in point: On the initial possession of the second half, with a stiff wind at their back and trailing by 14 points, the Redskins faced a third-and-12 at their 43. But Chaump called for an off-tackle run by injury-hampered tailback Jon Hall, who gained 1 yard.

"We tried to take advantage of what they would give us, but they weren't giving us anything," Chaump said. "It

wasn't for a lack of effort. We had some great players out there, giving everything they had. Guys like [center] Terry Sauerbry, [defensive lineman] Artie James and [linebacker] Brian Moser. They won their personal battles. But it's a team game. They put 11 kids out there on the field. And their 11 was better than ours."

The Colts received a huge performance from their quarterback, senior Tim Kirchhoff. He completed 11 of 17 — including 10 in a row at one point — for 188 yards and 2 touchdowns. Cedar Cliff also rushed for 154 yards on 41 carries.

The Colts now will face Pittsburgh Central Catholic (9-3-2), a 19-14 winner over Brashear, in Saturday's championship game at Penn State's Beaver Stadium.

"It hurts, but we feel we can beat anybody on a given day. Today, they were better than we were," said Moser, a 6-2, 225-pound senior who is drawing a great deal of major-college interest. "We played as tough as we could. We were out there banging away.

"Personally, this won't affect what kind of great season we had. It was just one of those days. Whether we're remembered or not, I know I'll never forget it. I love to play football, and so do the rest of the guys, and that's what we did."

ST. PIUS X FALLS SHORT

In the Class A East Regionals, St. Pius X (9-4) was eliminated by Camp Hill (12-1), 20-10, at Governor Mifflin High in Shillington.

The Winged Lions, who had won their last four games, were leading late in the third period, 10-7. But on a fourth-and-inches just inside the Camp Hill 20, fullback Jeff Klenk was stopped for no gain up the middle. Camp Hill then drove for the go-ahead touchdown. Mark Baron, who had tackled Klenk on that pivotal fourth-down try, covered the last 31 yards on a run around the left side. Camp Hill added a final touchdown with less than two minutes left, on a 9-yard run by fullback Eric Johnson (20 carries, 162 yards).

St. Pius scored its lone touchdown

the first time it touched the ball. Mike Baumeister's 4-yard run capped a seven-play, 71-yard drive. Camp Hill tied the game late in the first half, on a 38-yard pass from Erik Reisser to Michael Whitman, but a 33-yard field goal by Mike Talarico midway through the third quarter put Pius back in front by three.

Camp Hill faces Cambridge Springs (11-0-1), which beat East Brady, 12-6, in Saturday's title game at Shippensburg.

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