

Son shines like father for Ghosts

Bill Neely's father was a star at Abington. The youngster drew fond comparisons, and praise.

By Nick Pierra

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His Abington football teammates and coaches call him "J.R.," short for "junior," to distinguish Bill Neely from his father of the same name.

But on the field at least, there's not much difference between J.R. and his father, a three-sport star for Abington in the late 1960s who is popular once again, thanks to his son.

J.R. provided longtime Abington fans with *deja vu* Saturday by almost singlehandedly tearing apart visiting Neshaminy to lead the Ghosts to a 34-13 Suburban One League National Conference victory.

Neely, a 6-foot-1, 185-pound junior two-way back, played his first full game at tailback and overpowered Neshaminy defenders for 180 yards on 17 carries. His offensive highlights included a 77-yard touchdown run on the second play of the game and three straight runs totaling 37 yards to set up the first of Abington's two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

That happened after he broke up a fourth-down pass deep in Abington territory to squelch a Neshaminy threat.

"I thought I was going to play offense from the start of the season," Neely said. "But I hurt my back and my knee and I just wasn't in there."

The nagging injuries had kept Neely out of full-time duty until recently. Saturday's game didn't help. "My back is still hurting," he said. "But it doesn't matter. We got the win."

Neely began to draw praise from opponents Oct. 1, after a 30-7 loss to



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Neshaminy's Careem Hunte runs for the Redskins' first touchdown against Abington. The junior quarterback ran for another Neshaminy touchdown, but the Ghosts came out on top, 34-13.

Abington Neshaminy

34
13

Suburban One National football

Council Rock. Indians head coach Mike Ortmann was impressed with Neely's effort, saying his speed and style reminded him of Neely Sr., with whom Ortmann played in high school.

It continued on Saturday with Neshaminy assistant coach Ed Hofmann, another Abington graduate who remains in awe of his former teammate and is beginning to gain similar respect for his son.

"They're a whole different team with Neely back there," said Hofmann. "I played football with his father, and he was the greatest athlete I've ever seen here."

Said Abington head coach Doug Moister: "J.R. last week started coming on and he looks like he's going to be a great tailback. He's a very good defensive player already."

As well as Neely played and as ineffective as Neshaminy's offense was (six first downs), the Redskins still had a chance to win but for some early mistakes.

In the first quarter, a fumbled snap on a punt attempt gave Abington the ball at the Neshaminy 19-yard line, and the Ghosts capitalized when Neely later took it in from the 6.

On the Redskins' next series, Tim Smith fumbled an option pitch and Abington's Craig Rollins scooped it up and returned it 20 yards for another touchdown.

Tim Bushmer's two-point run

made it 20-0.

Neshaminy's lone bright spot was junior quarterback Careem Hunte, a sensational runner who scored both Redskins touchdowns.

The first came on a 19-yard run in the second period. And, with Neshaminy trailing, 28-7, late in the fourth quarter, he went around left end and raced 98 yards down the sideline untouched with 3 minutes, 18 seconds remaining.

Neshaminy	0	7	0	4	—	11
Abington	20	0	0	4	—	24

AD: Neely 77 run (kick failed)
AD: Neely 5 run (pass failed)
AD: Rollins 20 with fumble (Bushmer run)
NE: Hunte 19 run (LAW kick)
AD: Rollins 28 pass from Bushmer (Bushmer run)
NE: Hunte 98 run (kick failed)
AD: Stackhouse 22 run (kick failed)