

The Ghosts' chance to beat the Redskins disappears

By John Rouch

INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

An eerie silence hung over the Neshaminy football team, both in the locker room and warm-ups Saturday.

"It was extremely quiet," said Neshaminy coach Dick Bedesem. "I told the kids I hope this silence means something. I hope the explosion is going to come at kickoff."

The explosion didn't come until just before halftime. But when it did, it led to an exhilarating second half and a last-minute 21-20 victory for Neshaminy over Abington.

Neshaminy evened its record to 3-3, 2-3 in the Suburban One National. Abington fell to 4-2 and 3-2.

Trailing 7-0, Neshaminy faced a third-and-14 from Abington's 22-yard line just 2 minutes before halftime.

That's when Neshaminy's Arnie Gooch ran a post pattern to the left corner of the end zone. He had one defender in front of him and another clinging to the back of his jersey.

But quarterback Joe Mormello threw a perfect spiral that Gooch grabbed between the two defenders for a 22-yard touchdown.

"I felt [the defender's] fingers on the ball and I just took it away from him," Gooch said. "I don't think you can practice that play."

"The kid [Gooch] is such a great athlete," Bedesem said.

Gooch's touchdown seemed to set things in motion for both teams.

Abington's William Neely, one of

Neshaminy Abington

Suburban One National football

21
20

the defenders beaten on the play, atoned on the opening kick of the second half. The lanky sophomore speedster returned the kick 97 yards for a touchdown.

Neshaminy then retaliated with a 65-yard kickoff return by Bailie, which led to a 4-yard touchdown run by Mormello.

Later, after a fourth-quarter interception by teammate Kevin Castner, Mormello ran 49 yards behind great left-side blocking for a touchdown. The score gave the Redskins a 21-14 lead with 6 minutes left.

Table tennis matches have less back-and-forth action.

But Abington wasn't through. Abington running back Mitch Lee took over as quarterback with 1:10 left in the game and the Ghosts at Neshaminy's 44. Lee finished with 156 yards rushing on 22 carries, but coach Doug Moister was counting on his strong arm this time.

On fourth-and-4, with 0:24 left, Lee let loose a perfect pass to Gabe Major, the quarterback-turned-receiver, who beat two Neshaminy defenders and caught the ball in stride at the 5 and went in for a touchdown. The score left Abington trailing, 21-20.

The question: Would the Ghosts settle for a tie and bring in Phil

Karn, the school's soccer star, for a near-certain extra point? Or would Abington go for the win?

"We weren't going to kick the extra point," Lee said.

"That wouldn't settle anything."

On the conversion attempt, Lee, at quarterback, rolled to his right, looking for Major in the corner of the end zone on a timing play. But Major stumbled. Lee couldn't see him, and the ball bounced harmlessly out of the end zone.

"It worked just the way the coaches planned, but Gabe slipped and I didn't see him," Lee said.

"But you can't blame a loss on a slip."

"We had our opportunities. We just didn't score," Moister said.

During the timeout before the play, Bedesem said, "I told our guys to keep their poise, play the defense we signal in, and everybody scramble — and that's what they did."

For his part, Mormello, on the sidelines, turned away from the conversion attempt.

"I wasn't watching," he said. "I just listened to the crowd."

The explosion of cheers told Mormello all he needed to know.

Abington	7	0	7	4	—	20
Neshaminy	0	8	7	6	—	21

- A: Butterfield 5 run (Karn kick)
 N: Gooch 22 pass from Mormello (Bormen run)
 A: Neely 37 kickoff return (Karn kick)
 N: Mormello 4 run (Sack kick)
 N: Mormello 49 run (kick failed)
 A: Major 37 pass from Lee (pass failed)



For The Inquirer / DAVID SWANSON

Heading for a collision with Abington's Antonio Mills (44) is Neshaminy quarterback Joe Mormello (19). Mormello scored twice for the victorious Redskins.