

For The Inquirer / JON ADAMS

Neshaminy's Lance Horwatt dives for extra yardage over Bensalem's Dave Marshall. The win was the Owls' first in nine games this season.

Fired-up Owls revel in first win

By Eric Karabell
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Late in the game, Neshaminy quarterback Careem Hunte scrambled toward the Bensalem sideline. Just before he got there, he was met by Bensalem safety Mark Pachucki, and he was met hard.

Hunte went down in a heap, and barely moved for five minutes. The Bensalem sideline went crazy, and it wasn't because the players wanted Hunte to be injured. To them, it was an inspiring hit that told the story of what would be Bensalem's first win of a long season.

A few minutes later, when the 20-6 Suburban One National win was finally secured, the celebration really began, with Owls coach Jack Klebe getting an ice-water shower and players flooding the field as if they had just won the Super Bowl.

"That hit was the exclamation point on this game," said Bensalem senior quarterback Matt Bolli, who threw two touchdown passes.

The Owls (1-8, 1-7) seemed to always find a way to lose games this season, but after falling behind, 6-0, they were in charge. The Redskins (3-7, 3-6) gained only 93 yards after Hunte scored on a fourth-and-inches play early in the second quarter.

Bensalem's first points came on the first of junior Joe Thompson's two touchdowns. Soon after Hunte scored, Thompson caught a short screen pass from Bolli and broke several tackles on his way to a 31-

Bensalem 20
Neshaminy 6

Suburban One National football

yard touchdown play. There were 10 seconds left to play in the first half, and it changed the momentum of the game.

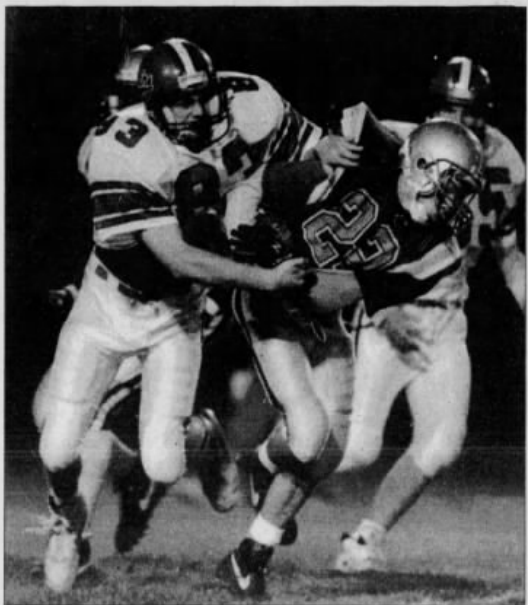
"It was just great," said Thompson, who gained a total of 95 yards rushing and receiving. "Our adrenaline level was so high. Everybody wanted this game. You can't stop our team when we have unity."

The Owls used the late first-half score to fire themselves up for the second half. On the opening drive, Hunte was intercepted for the first of two times by Owls junior Mike Fleming, and Bensalem had possession on its own 20.

Then, a team that barely moved the ball all year made it look easy as it went 80 yards on eight plays. Thompson ended the drive with another touchdown. This one came on a draw play and covered 17 yards.

"We've been in some games where we made frequent mistakes and shot ourselves in the foot," Klebe said.

With a 13-6 lead, Bensalem could feel it was finally close to that elusive victory. The defense hit harder, and Hunte especially felt that to be true. The talented junior took a lot of punishment. When the game ended, Hunte was lying on his back on the Neshaminy sideline, still trying to recover. But while the game was on,



Bensalem's Mike Fleming (22) is caught from behind by Neshaminy's Mike Marek (83) as he returns the opening kickoff.

he always got up.

"I thought our kids wanted this game too," Neshaminy coach Dick Bedesem said. "Near the end our kids looked up and were saying they were still in it. In effect we weren't, but they wouldn't quit."

The Owls' final touchdown came on a well-thrown pass from Bolli to junior wideout Ted Minnichbach for a 28-yard play with just over four minutes left in the game.

It was the third time the Owls

celebrated, but not the last. On the first play after the kickoff, Pachucki delivered the hit on Hunte—and the celebration really began.

Neshaminy	0	6	0	0	—	6
Bensalem	0	7	6	7	—	20

N: Hunte 1 run (kick failed)
B: Thompson 31 pass from Bolli (Lombardo kick)
B: Thompson 17 run (kick blocked)
B: Minnichbach 31 pass from Bolli (Lombardo kick)