

FOOTBALL

Redskins manage to recover from punishing 1st half

By Eric Karabell
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

After three road games to open the season, the Neshaminy football team finally came home. There, it received a rude welcome.

Norristown's John Johnson returned the opening kickoff 89 yards for a touchdown.

But the Redskins regrouped, weathered a three-touchdown first half by Johnson, and beat the Eagles, 25-18, in a Suburban One National Conference game Friday.

"We started out looking a little shaky with the opening kickoff," Neshaminy coach Dick Bedesem said. "Once our kids settled down, they played what I thought was excellent ball."

Neshaminy (2-2, 1-1) recovered from the early fireworks and scored on its first possession, a 7-play, 67-yard drive. Bill Borman scored on a 10-yard run, and Jared Stewart's extra point was blocked, making the score 6-6.

Stewart kicked off again, but Johnson didn't return this one for a touchdown.

Instead, he waited until Norristown's first play from scrimmage, running 75 yards for the touchdown. Bob Brouse had his second extra point of the game blocked, and Norristown held a 12-6 lead.

Johnson scored again on a 4-yard touchdown run, and after Eric Augustin's pass attempt for two points fell incomplete, Norristown held an 18-6 lead.

For the second time, Neshaminy came right back after a Norristown touchdown and scored one of its own.

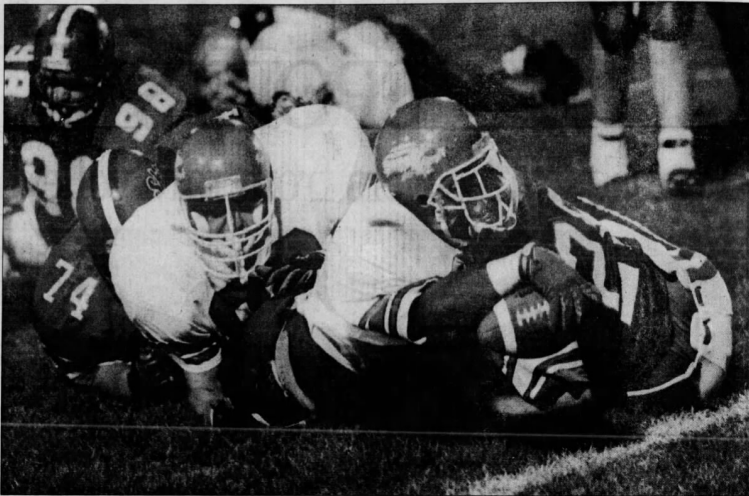
Quarterback Joe Mormello completed a 10-play, 72-yard drive with a 2-yard sneak for a touchdown, and Stewart's kick made it 18-13 with 5 minutes left in the half.

Johnson almost returned the ensuing kick for a score but was stopped after a 35-yard return.

Thus began a frustrating end to Norristown's offense. From that point on, the Eagles managed two first downs and never threatened.

Johnson, who had 104 yards rushing at halftime, finished with 114 on 13 carries.

But Neshaminy got better. It took the second-half kick and scored on another long drive, this one of 8



For The Inquirer / CHÉRIE KEMPER-STANER

Norristown's Quan Beatty stretches to get the maximum yardage in the first half. The Eagles scored 3 touchdowns during the half.

Neshaminy 25 Norristown 18

running plays and 71 yards. B.J. Bailie finished the drive with a 24-yard run. Mormello's pass for two points failed, but the Redskins had the lead at 19-18.

"The first quarter, we were totally unstoppable," Norristown coach Roger Grove said. "In the second half, we just let them get back in the game. We let them get momentum. We just made too many mistakes, and we seemed to lack intensity."

Neshaminy started another long

drive and capitalized on it, as Bailie scored on a 1-yard run. Mormello's run for 2 points failed. Overall, the Redskins had four long scoring drives and two others that ended in missed field goals. They dominated the time of possession.

Norristown had only four second-half possessions as Neshaminy ran the ball well and wasted time. Redskins linebacker John Dunkley dominated the second half, stopping Johnson numerous times, and he also had an interception. Norristown's final drive ended with a sack by Mark Curry.

Dunkley said, "We just didn't want to lose. We got sick of losing. Everybody just got their heads in the

game. We didn't have to make any adjustments."

Norristown (1-4, 1-1) was coming off an emotional 13-12 win at Bensalem. As Neshaminy was, the Eagles long for a home game, after three weeks on the road.

"I guess we got kind of cocky after last week," Norristown tackle Preston Howard said. "In the second half,

our heads got a little big. It was a mental breakdown, team-wise."

Norristown	12	6	0	0	-	18
Neshaminy	8	7	6	6	-	25
NO: Johnson 89 kickoff return (kick blocked)						
NE: Borman 10 run (kick failed)						
NO: Johnson 75 run (kick blocked)						
NO: Johnson 4 run (pass failed)						
NE: Mormello 2 run (Stewart kick)						
NE: Bailie 24 run (pass failed)						
NE: Bailie 1 run (run failed)						



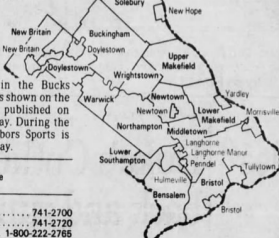
Norristown's Jermaine Fisher stops Neshaminy's John Dunkley. On defense, Dunkley dominated the second half.

Neighbors

Neighbors is a section of The Inquirer that provides news about people, events, schools and governments in the Bucks County communities shown on the map. Neighbors is published on Sunday and Thursday. During the school year, Neighbors Sports is published on Monday.

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