FOOTBALL

Ghosts' bid to upset Redskins falls short

Game of the Week: Neshaminy 35 Abington 27

By Tim Panaccio
Inquirer Staff Writer

After seeing Abington's football team, there is little doubt as to how these guys earned the moniker Galloping Ghosts.

Shawn Wooden does the galloping off right tackle, and Jason Hughes is merely a ghostly blur on sideline pass routes.

Yet despite Wooden's 18 carries for 148 yards and Hughes' two touchdowns and 71 yards in pass receptions, the eighth-ranked Ghosts (1-1) were a few illusions short of upsetting second-ranked Neshaminy (2-0) Friday night as the Redskins held on for a 35-27 victory at Harry E. Franks Stadium.

It was a superb football game, the kind neither team deserved to lose. It ended with the Ghosts fumbling a snap away on the Redskins' 39-yard line in the final 4 seconds.

"I am not displeased," Abington coach Doug Moister said. "We put a lot of points on the board. We played a great game."

Moister played to win, too. With 7 minutes, 56 seconds left to play, Wooden, a junior running back, broke two tackles en route to a 17-yard TD that brought Abington to within 28-27.

Moister elected to go for a 2-point conversion.

"I told them at the half, we were going for the win," Moister said. "This was a nonleague game. If we're going to play for a state championship, we have to beat Neshaminy."

The 2-point play was a pitch from quarterback Tinker Harris to Wooden, but Harris was hit on the pitch and fumbled.

Five minutes later, Neshaminy, aided by Jason Hillaert's blocked punt, added insurance points with James Franklin's 3-yard TD run.

For Neshaminy, there was little time to relish the win because the Redskins next face top-ranked Central Bucks West on Friday in Doylestown.

"Had we looked for one second toward CBW, we would have lost this game tonight," Redskins coach John Chaump said. "Now that it's here, we'll see what happens. This year, I wanted to take it one game at a time. We really don't know how good we are."

You can bet C.B. West coach Mike Pettine is prepared to give Chaump an answer to that question.

What Chaump does know, however, is that his team can recover quickly from unexpected surprises such as Hughes' 86-yard kick return touchdown that opened the second half.

"I'm supposed to go with the wedge," Hughes said. "But the last two games, I've seen daylight outside and that's where I went."

Hughes returned a kick 90 yards for a touchdown the week before against Bishop McDevitt.

But after Hughes' latest run, Neshaminy came back as Rob Latronica went 55 yards from scrimmage for a touchdown.

Chaump also knows his defense may bend a lot, but it doesn't break, as evidenced by Harris completing only 2 of his final 9 passes (6 of 15 for 106 yards overall).

Hillaert's blocked punt on fourth-and-8 from the Abington 41 gave the Redskins the ball at the 28. It may have been the biggest play in the game because it also gave Neshaminy's defense a shot in the arm after Wooden had made sawdust of it most of the night.

"We ran three guys in on the center and two guys to fill the gaps," Hillaert said. "We overload on the center. We had Todd Altman and George Ciervo and myself coming inside. I just got a hole and got through it."

Neshaminy had ample offensive heroes. Jon Hall, converted from tailback, continues to have an amazing season as he caught three passes for 90 yards and two touchdowns.

The 5-foot, 9-inch, 175-pound senior has four TD receptions in two games. Franklin completed only 5 of 15 passes for 112 yards, but his two TDs to Hall were picture perfect. The first was a 35-yard fade pattern that Hall caught over his right shoulder in the first quarter.

The other came in the waning seconds of the first half. It was a 49-yard strike that Hall caught over his left shoulder against double coverage and gave Neshaminy a 14-7 lead.

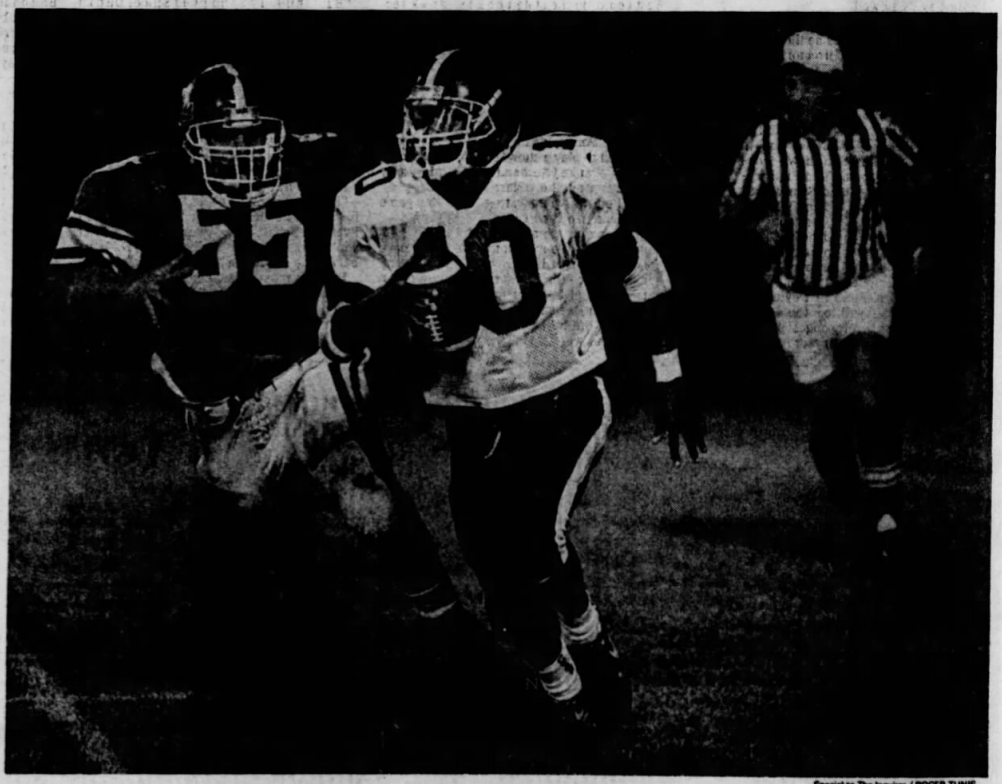
"Tinker Harris is a great football player," Chaump said. "But if Hall takes the two [Harris and Jason Hughes] of them deep three times in a row, something is going to happen."

It happened with 4 seconds left on the clock when Hall outjumped Harris and then broke free of Hughes.

Neshaminy's other offensive gun was Latronica, who rushed 14 times for 104 yards and two touchdowns.

Abington	0	7	14	6	— 27
Neshaminy	7	7	14	7	— 35

N: Hall 35 pass from Franklin (Ramos kick)
A: Wooden 1 run (Godfrey kick)
N: Hall 49 pass from Franklin (Ramos kick)
A: Hughes 86 kick return (Godfrey kick
N: Latronica 55 run (Ramos kick)
N: Latronica 3 run (Ramos kick)
A: Hughes 9 pass from Harris (Godfrey kick)
A: Wooden 17 run (run failed)
N: Franklin 3 run (Ramos kick)



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Abington quarterback Tinker Harris runs away from Neshaminy defender Chris Teti. Harris completed 6 of 15 passes in the game.

Neighbors

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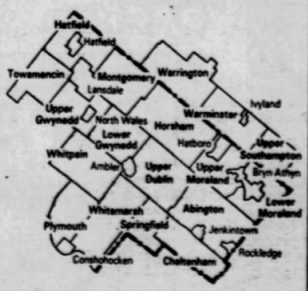

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