

Swittenberg delivers as Norristown tops Neshaminy, 20-17

Helped by a powerful offensive line, the tailback rushed for 223 yards and two touchdowns in the league clash.

By Jay Nagle
FOR THE INQUIRER

LANGHORNE — Tailback Troy Swittenberg returned to the Norristown lineup Friday night. An unsung offensive line provided the welcoming committee.

Swittenberg, who sat out the previous week's 38-0 victory at Bensalem with a sore right ankle, carried the ball 27 times for 223 yards and a pair of touchdowns as the Eagles held off stubborn Neshaminy, 20-17, in a slippery Suburban One League National Conference game.

Norristown (5-1 overall, 4-1 league), which has won two in a row since suffering a 28-13 setback to defending state champion Central Bucks West, kept alive its hopes for a berth in the District 1 Class AAAA playoffs.

The loss, meanwhile, was the latest in a series of frustrating setbacks for the Redskins (1-5, 1-4), who rallied from a 20-5 halftime deficit before finally falling short.

The victory marked the second straight week a Norristown ballcarrier surpassed the 200-yard barrier.

Against Bensalem, junior Audley Stewart stepped into Swittenberg's starting spot and responded with 239 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries.

For those numbers, which Swittenberg nearly duplicated Friday, Norristown can thank an offensive line that often has been overshadowed by the individual brilliance of the Eagles' skill-position players.

Tight end Josh Kinloch, tackles Troy Ellis and C.J. Montelcone, guards Doug White and Yoboa Cobbold, and center Mike Guinard were particularly effective during a solid first half. Swittenberg finished the first 24 minutes with 181 yards and two TDs on 13 carries.

"They're a great line," Swittenberg said.

"People don't give them enough credit for what they do."

Norristown's line also allowed quarterback Kris Blake enough time to find wide receiver James Edmonds for a 5-yard first-quarter touchdown pass.

"You hear a lot about our running game, but you never hear anything about the line," said Eagles head coach Roger Grove.

"I don't care how good a back you are, if you don't have people blocking in front of you, you're not going anywhere."

Neshaminy, which received a safety and a Rob Fryer 37-yard field goal in the first half, used a pair of 1-yard runs by Mike Weaver to pull close in the fourth quarter.

The Redskins had a chance to steal a win when a fumbled Norristown exchange from

center squirted loose at the Neshaminy 45-yard line with one minute to play.

But fullback Daryl Johnson not only recovered the ball on the run, he also advanced it 22 yards to put the game away.

"We were down, 20-5, at halftime to one of the top teams in the state and it's pouring rain," Neshaminy coach Mark Schmidt said.

"But our kids hung in there, and I'm proud of them for that."

Norristown	7	13	0	0	-120
Neshaminy	0	5	0	12	+77

No: Edmonds 5 pass from Blake (Cook kick)

Nr: Safety (Hadrick tackled in end zone)

Nr: Fryer 37 FG

No: Swittenberg 58 run (Cook kick)

No: Swittenberg 52 run (kick failed)

No: Weaver 1 run (pass failed)

Nr: Weaver 1 run (kick failed)