

Suburban One League National Conference

Indians' placekicker finally beats Redskins

By Frank Bertucci
INQUIRER SUBURBAN STAFF

Matt Stapleton was where he wanted to be, lining up for a possible game-winning field goal for Council Rock against host Neshaminy on Friday night.

The scoreboard clock was about to hit 0:00.

In fact, Stapleton was in that very situation four times before he finally connected to give the Indians a 31-28 double-overtime victory over the Redskins.

Stapleton, a senior in his third season as the Indians' placekicker, missed three field goals at the end of regulation and a fourth in overtime before finally hitting the game-winning kick on the Indians' second possession in overtime.

"I had to put all the other kicks aside," Stapleton said of his fifth kick. "I was nervous. When I missed an extra point [in the first half], it started to make me think what I was doing wrong. Kicking doesn't really involve thinking, but I did a lot of that."

Stapleton's game-on-the-line situation evolved after the Indians (2-1, 1-1 Suburban One League National Conference) rallied from a 28-13 deficit to tie the score, 28-28, in the fourth period.

The Indians pulled even with less than two minutes to play on a two-point conversion pass from quarterback Ray Wambold to John Miles after a touchdown run by Wambold. The Rock defense then held Neshaminy, which was forced to punt from its own 11.

Rock coach Mike Ortman sent in Stapleton — whose career best was a 43-yarder against Harry S Truman last season — to attempt a 52-yard field goal with 4 seconds showing on the clock.

"I got clipped pretty good on that play," Stapleton said of his kick, which was short.

Neshaminy was called for roughing the kicker, putting Stapleton 15 yards closer, for a second try from 37 yards. That attempt sailed wide left, but an encroachment call on the Neshaminy defense gave Stapleton another chance from 32 yards away.

"I hit it well, but I carried my leg through, and the ball sailed," Stapleton said of miss No. 3.

In overtime, Rock's defense held Neshaminy (1-2, 0-2) on four downs, and Ortman sent Stapleton in for a field-goal try to win the game on first down. Teams start overtime possessions on the opposition's 10, meaning Stapleton's attempt was from 27 yards.

"I overcompensated and kicked it wide right," Stapleton said of his fourth miss.

The score was still tied, 28-28, when Council Rock took the ball for the first possession of the next overtime. After the Indians failed to cross the goal line on three plays, Ortman sent his kicker out again. This one, finally, was good from 22 yards out.

"It's great to have that last kick at the end, and I got a lot of them,"

he said. "I was so happy we won, but our defense turned in a great performance."

Stapleton's kick gave Council Rock a 31-28 lead but not an assured victory because Neshaminy still had four plays from the 10.

On fourth down, Mike Malen, a senior in his first year as the Redskins' placekicker, had a chance to tie the score and send the teams into another overtime.

He missed, and Matt Stapleton was Council Rock's hero despite his 1-for-5 performance with no time showing on the clock.

A win for the new guy. Three games into his career as a head coach, Tim Sorber has his first victory.

Abington (1-2, 1-1) scored a 27-12 win at Harry S Truman (2-1, 1-1) Friday night, ending a 10-game conference losing streak and equaling the win total the Ghosts have had in each of the last three seasons.

"I was happy with our effort against our first two opponents [Norristown and Central Bucks West]," Sorber said. "I thought this was a game we could win."

"I told the team we were done with moral victories. After you play those teams, our kids had a tremendous amount of confidence we could win the game."

Sorber said that his team's goal was to stop Truman's Trevor Smith, who had gained more than 300 yards in the Tigers' first two games, and that Truman's goal was to stop Abington's Maleek Miles.

Both teams succeeded, but the difference was the Ghosts' Jarreau Clark, who rushed for 106 yards and scored two touchdowns.

West wings it. With a 45-0 halftime lead at Bensalem on Friday night, Central Bucks West coach Mike Carey gave his starters the rest of the night off. West breezed, 51-6.

"The positive about this game is that we hit bodies other than ourselves," Carey said. "[Former coach] Mike Pettine ran hard practices, but my practices are harder. We risk getting injured."

West (3-0, 2-0) had faced little opposition in rolling to wins over Titusville, Fla., and Abington before Bensalem.

Dave Camburn stole the show against the Owls, returning punts for touchdowns of 78 and 79 yards, rushing for 17 yards on two carries, and catching one pass for 24 yards.

East streak at six. Central Bucks East ended last season with a three-game winning streak and has begun this season with a three-game winning streak.

The latest victory was a 49-0 rout of William Tennent on Friday night.

One of the key performers on defense for coach Larry Greene has been senior Bob Bense, who has five quarterback sacks this season.

"He's come into his own as a senior," Greene said.