

SEEING YELLOW

Wilmington ends Bishop McCort's 11-game win streak

By Travis L. Pickens

Pa. Football News

SLIPPERY ROCK – All week the parents of Wilmington football players sold golden hats and scarves, hoping to create a “Gold Night” for their team’s Class AA state quarterfinal game against Bishop McCort.

In truth, the items matched the color of the flags referees throw to signal a penalty. In that sense, the Crimson Crushers (11-2) were surrounded by yellow Friday night at Slippery Rock University’s Thompson Stadium.

McCort, which reeled off 11-straight wins after a season-opening loss, was flagged seven times for 55 yards in a 13-6 defeat. The Greyhounds (14-0) had but one infraction.

Wilmington moves on to the state semifinals against Jeannette. The Jayhawks beat Brookville, 32-7, Friday.

“In the first half I was really upset with some of the penalties,” McCort coach Ken Salem said. “I thought a lot of them were late.”

Following Brad Barbin’s 17-yard touchdown run in the second quarter, McCort was called for holding. The run could have put the Crushers up 13-0 but instead pushed it back. McCort turned the ball over on downs two plays later.

“That was huge,” Salem said. “We’re in the end zone then the flag comes out. It’s hard to come up with second or third-and-long plays in these kinds of conditions.”

The Crushers, who jumped out to an early 6-0 lead on Scott Lewis’s 2-yard touchdown run in the first quarter, were only 5-for-15 (33 percent) on third down in a game that was played in strong wind and steady snow.

“Maybe it did, I don’t know,” Wilmington coach Terry Verrelli said of the weather having an effect on the Johnstown-based team. “I was too involved in the game to notice that.”

What Verrelli did notice was that his team was locked in a dog fight against a Crushers squad with a distinct size advantage.

“Look at the size of them; that’s a good football team,” Verrelli said. “What I was concerned about was if we could move the football against these big guys.”

The Greyhounds couldn’t ... with the exception of one play. Clinging to a 7-6 lead late in the third quarter, running back Chris Burns broke through the line and sprinted up the right sideline for a 63-yard touchdown. The extra point was blocked but the Hounds had breathing room and a 13-6 lead.

“I knew I had to make a play sooner or later,” Burns said. “I knew it was going to come. I had to stay patient.”

To that point, the 5-foot-11, 180-pound junior had been held in check. Burns, who finished with 108 yards, collected only 20 yards on eight carries before the score.

“Thank God,” Burns said of what was going through his head after the score. “I got it, now we’re up by seven points ... let’s finish it.”

But McCort wasn’t about to go away quietly.

With 9:40 left in the game, the Crushers got the ball on their own 20 and commenced to march into the Wilmington red zone before being penalized. A holding call during Scott Lewis’s run to the 10 put the Crushers in a third-and-21 from the 31. Two plays later, on fourth-and-14, junior tight end Michael Cruz dropped Jordan Defrances’s pass at the goal line.

“I don’t really know what (Bishop McCort) was doing,” Wilmington senior offensive guard Andy Urey said of the multitude of penalties against the Crushers. “All I’m worried about right now is celebrating.”

Wilmington took the lead for the good in the second quarter. After McCort attempted a fake punt at its own 15, quarterback Matt Reiber ran in a 1-yard touchdown to cap a 4-play drive.

SCORE BY QUARTERS

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Bishop McCort | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 6 |
| Wilmington | 0 | 7 | 6 | 0 | - | 13 |

First quarter

BM – Lewis 2 run (pass failed), 3:18

Second quarter

W—Reiber 1 run (Riggall kick), 1:43

Third quarter

W—Burns 63 run (kick blocked), 1:06

| TEAM STATISTICS | BM | W |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|
| First downs | 15 | 8 |
| Yards rushing | 53-183 | 32-186 |
| Passing (comp.-att.-int.) | 4-16-0 | 0-1-0 |
| Yards passing | 43 | 0 |
| Total yards | 226 | 186 |
| Fumbles lost | 0-0 | 2-2 |
| Penalties-yards | 7-55 | 1-15 |
| Punts-avg. | 3-16 | 5-22.8 |

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING: Bishop McCort – Lewis 28-145, Barbin 19-61, Seidel 2-5, Varga 1-2, Defrances 3-(-30). Wilmington – Burns 12-108, Minter 10-42, Bruno 5-30, Reynolds 1-5, Reiber 4-1.

PASSING: Bishop McCort – Defrances 4-15-0-43, Cruz 0-1-0-0. Wilmington – Reiber 0-1-0-0.

RECEIVING: Bishop McCort – Barbin 2-40, Seidel 1-7, Cruz 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS: Bishop McCort – none. Wilmington – none.