

Wilmington changes attitude, downs Sharon

By Travis Pickens
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SLIPPERY ROCK - Wilmington's locker room couldn't have been a happy place.

The Greyhounds, ranked fifth in the state according to the Harrisburg Patriot-News, found themselves locked in a 7-7 tie with Sharon at halftime of a District 10 Class AA semifinal at Slippery Rock University's Thompson Stadium.

"It was what you would expect from a 7-7 tie at halftime," Wilmington junior fullback Forrest Minter said of the locker room atmosphere. "That's what got us pumped up and let us come out here and get the victory."

Wilmington coach Terry Verrelli was a little more specific as to what transpired at halftime.

"A little bit of yelling and screaming," Verrelli said. "There were no adjustments; it was a matter of getting in the right frame of mind, tackling and playing the way we know how."

It wasn't until the fourth quarter that the Hounds got rolling in a game they won, 35-7. Running back Chris Burns gave Wilmington (12-0) the lead with 6:07 left in the third quarter via a 4-yard run. Nick Riggall's extra point made it 14-7 heading into a fourth quarter that saw Wilmington add 21 more points to its lead.

"Defensively we played well for three quarters," Sharon coach Bob Fromm said. "We executed the game plan perfectly for three quarters. But in the fourth quarter we just didn't play good football."

Wilmington, which meets Fairview (11-1) in the district final next weekend, increased its lead to 28-7 thanks to two touchdowns in a span of 3:01. On a key play, Hounds quarterback Jake Reiber found Nate Reynolds along the sideline for a 13-yard gain on third-and-12 from their own 39, setting up Reiber's 7-yard run three plays later.

After Burns returned a Todd Rearick interception 40 yards, David Bruno found the end zone from five yards out, capping a three-play drive with 5:55 left in the game.

"We just didn't have any fire in that first half," Verrelli said. "A little bit of yelling in the locker room maybe helped out. (Our players) came out in the second half the way we expected them to play."

A major part of Wilmington's offense was the running of the 5-foot-10, 170-pound Minter. Despite being held out of the end zone, Minter ran for a game-high 117 yards on 10 carries, 88 coming after halftime.

"We realized that we could possibly lose this game," Minter said. "We did not want to let that happen so we came out with as much energy as humanly possible. We just got pumped up with pure adrenaline."

Sharon, which dropped a 42-7 decision to Wilmington on Oct. 20, was the team with more energy in the opening half. Reiber, courtesy of a 1-yard keeper, gave the Hounds a 7-0 lead with 2:02 left in the first quarter, but the Tigers (8-3) responded with running back Kellen Harris's 6-yard touchdown 9:53 before halftime.

"When (my kids) get knocked down they get back up," Fromm said. "We told them on Thursday, 'Hey, look: if you get knocked down that's not a sin. Not getting back up is.'"

"We came out and laid it on the line tonight. Things just didn't work out in the end, that's all."

Sharon vs. Wilmington

Sharon	0	7	0	0	-	7
Wilmington	7	0	7	21	-	35

First Quarter

W - Reiber 1 run (Riggall kick), 2:02

Second Quarter

S - Harris 6 run (Flaughter kick), 9:53

Third Quarter

W - Burns 4 run (Riggall kick), 6:07

Fourth Quarter

W - Reiber 7 run (Riggall kick), 8:56

W - Bruno 5 run (Riggall kick), 5:55

W - Burns 36 run (Riggall kick), 2:42

TEAM STATISTICS

	S	W
First downs	10	15
Rushing attempts-yards	38-168	38-259
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	2-13-2	6-11-1
Yards passing	19	90
Total yards	187	349
Fumbles-lost	0-0	3-0
Penalties-yards	3-15	6-40

Punts-average 6-18 4-22.5

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Passing: Sharon - Rearick 2-9-19-1, Jennings 0-3-0-0, White 0-1-0-1. Wilmington - Reiber 6-11-90-1.

Rushing: Sharon - Johnson 10-56, White 5-40, Rearick 11-30, Altman 3-16, Jennings 5-14, Harris 3-12, Pearson 1-0.
Wilmington - Minter 10-117, Burns 13-98, Bruno 6-28, Reiber 9-16.

Receiving: Sharon - White 1-18, Harris 1-1. Wilmington - Beatty 3-43, Reynolds 2-28, Burns 1-9.