

Beverly's back in business

Win over Swampscott puts Panthers at 3-0 to start season

The Boston Globe

By Julian Benbow, Globe Correspondent | September 28, 2006

SWAMPSCOTT -- Of course Pat Bailey knew. He's known for at least three years now.

Swampscott beat Beverly last year and the year before that and the year before that and so on for what seemed like infinity, although it was actually 1998.

For that reason, Swampscott's Big Blue could walk into their home Hurd Stadium on Friday night noses up, despite the undefeated Panthers team on the other sideline.

The Big Blue didn't have to pay attention to the numbers: Beverly outscoring its opponents, 75-18, in its first two games; Beverly remaining unbeaten a year after starting the 2005 season 1-4; Bailey himself running for enough yards to get him from Beverly to Dorchester and back.

Swampscott could assume it would recover from a Week 2 loss to Lynn Classical and bounce back by beating up on a team it had bullied for almost a decade.

As for that, Bailey said, ``How do I put this . . . there's a little `energy' between the two teams."

And there was plenty of juice in the Panthers, who rolled to a 34-7 victory.

Beverly coach Dan Bauer didn't want to focus on the Swampscott skid during the week leading up to the game. He just wanted to motivate his players. If he had his way, his newspaper quotes would be bland, his stories would be dry, and for another week, his football team would be undefeated.

``I tell all the reporters I'm like vanilla ice cream," he said, proceeding to eat a Double Stuf peanut butter Oreo and a chocolate candy bar and wash it down with a cup of coffee.

He does have flavor, and every so often he is willing to share.

That Thursday afternoon, a day before game day, Bauer brought all his players into a huddle by the practice field end zone and ran through the last-minute minutiae.

``Remember to dress for success," he told them.

``Remember what time to dismiss," he reminded them.

``Remember to get something good to eat," he said.

Then, before he let them go to the locker room, he left them with something to think about.

``They don't respect us," he told them. ``And that's fine. I don't care about them. I care about us."

Those words were made for bulletin boards, and Bauer knew it. In a week full of heated practices, Bauer said, there weren't a lot of fiery speeches.

Just that one.

He didn't like to throw those kinds of things out there, knowing it could come back around later in the season, but at that moment he had to motivate his team.

After one last look at some game tape, Bailey left the locker room with brothers Alex and David Mock not too far behind.

They'd already gotten the idea.

``They don't have to respect us," David Mock said. ``We haven't beaten them in what seven, eight years. Why would they respect us?"

They all nodded. The game was huge, not just because it meant the end of a streak, but as Bailey said, ``It's a lot better to be 3-0 than it is to be 2-1."

On paper, the Panthers roster may as well have read ``Bailey, et al." He would be a threat whether he lined up as a running back or a kick returner.

But midway through last Friday's game, Bailey was barely a blip in the line score.

Beverly quarterback Nick Tanzella already had run for a 4-yard touchdown and was working on a 10-for-12, 116-yard performance in which he would throw for another score.

Bailey's understudy, Greg Pierce , who broke loose for a 28-yard touchdown in the second quarter, was on his way to a 7-carry, 78-yard day. And the Panthers' defense had successfully managed to harass Swampscott quarterback John Cassidy .

If there were two people on Swampscott's roster to worry about, it was Cassidy and his target of choice, Brendan Garner .

``That's definitely what they're known for," Bailey said. ``Their passing game."

But Cassidy came up empty on four of his first five pass attempts, and had to pick himself up off the grass more times than he would have liked with Beverly defensive linemen Pat Abate and Kevin

Thomasson shredding his offensive line.

Cassidy, 12 of 24 for 131 yards, couldn't have found his rhythm with a metronome.

And when it looked like the Big Blue could get back in the game , down just 19-7 in the third quarter; when it looked like Cassidy could create something from 21 yards out on fourth-and-9; when it looked like setting up in the shotgun would give him enough time to work magic, Beverly senior linebacker Nate Verry came through the middle untouched, threw Cassidy to the ground, and caused Swampscott to turn the ball over on downs and ultimately turn the game.

The defense was the backbone, the quarterback was the stud, but somehow Bailey was still the star, at least from the outside looking in at his 170-yard game.

A reporter stood outside the locker room, pen and pad ready, when David Mock approached. He was giving some of his teammates rides and needed to know if Bailey was coming.

``Are you waiting on Patrick?" he asked, already knowing the answer. ``Could you make it quick?"

It wasn't that he was being rude, the guys just had a party to get to, and he was waiting on his friend.

Bailey explained when he came out. Nick Traicoff's parents were having a cookout for the players.

``They have one after every game," he said. ``Win or lose."

And so they went. Only this time, when they left for the party, he and his team were 3-0.

Which is a lot better than being 2-1. ■