



## Bailey extra special on special teams

By Mike Grenier

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BEVERLY - If the Marblehead High football team was going to have even a remote chance of upsetting Beverly Saturday, Magicians head coach Doug Chernovetz thought it would be essential to boot the ball into no man's land on special teams.

In other words, don't let Beverly's spectacular back, Pat Bailey, touch the ball.

"We practiced not kicking the ball to Bailey," Chernovetz said after Beverly thumped his team, 34-6, at Hurd Stadium. "That was our (strategy). Really, I didn't care if we kicked the ball out of bounds."

Chernovetz had the right idea, but the Magicians paid dearly for not executing the plan.

The first time Bailey touched the ball - the opening kickoff - he returned it 81 yards for a touchdown that gave the Panthers a 6-0 lead just 14 seconds into the game.

The next time he touched it - on Marblehead's first punt - he raced 85 yards for a score that made it 13-0 midway through the first period.

"We can't do that," emphasized Chernovetz, whose team also surrendered Nick Tanzella's 14-yard touchdown pass to Pat Abate before the first period was over. "We can't come back from 21-0 in the first quarter against a team with a great back like that. Bailey is a great player, and Beverly has a good all-around team."

Beverly is showing signs that it is, indeed, a well-rounded team. The Panthers first-team defense has yielded just 12 points in blowout wins over Lynn English and Marblehead. If they can remain productive on special teams along with everything else they have going for them, they'll be a factor in the Northeastern Conference race for the first time since 1998, when they went 9-1.

But the Panthers are proceeding cautiously, as well they should. They've been blessed with a favorable schedule so far and have dissected opponents they felt they could handle. But that's about to change.

"Wait until we play Swampscott," said Beverly coach Dan Bauer, referring to Friday's home matinee matchup (3 p.m.) against a high octane offense. "That's going to be the first big test for our team."

Still, Bauer has to like the tempo the Panthers have established in the first two weeks. Plus, he has Bailey on his side and no one else does.

Bailey, who plays much bigger than his 5-foot-7, 155-pound frame, collected four touchdowns against Marblehead and

finished with 98 yards on 17 carries. He also had a 44-yard touchdown run nullified by a Beverly penalty.

What Bailey did on special teams early in the game may be unprecedented in the long and often glorious history of Beverly High football. Perhaps someone who has encyclopedic knowledge of the Panthers for the last 105 years or so can tell you about a kid returning a kickoff and a punt for touchdowns in the same game, but Bailey did it on consecutive plays to start the game.

Safe to say, it's probably a first.

"I didn't get any returns (against Lynn English)," said Bailey, who is always modest about his personal accomplishments and quick to spread the credit to his teammates. "This time there was just some open space on the right side. The blocking was great (on both plays). A lane developed and I just took it."

Veteran coaches who witnessed Bailey's special teams magic couldn't recall seeing two plays like that to begin a game.

"I've been in coaching for 35 years and I don't remember anything like it," said Winthrop coach Tony Fucillo, who had the luxury of scouting this game following his team's impressive win over Masconomet Friday night. "Bailey is just terrific. When we played Beverly last year, we made it a point to kick it away from him and he still scored (on special teams). The ball was on the grass, the play was practically blown dead, but he picked it up and went the distance."

Beverly's Dave Wilbur, who's been coaching for more than 30 years, suggested a couple of legendary names as possibilities to match what Bailey did. But they were just that - suggestions.

"Has it been done before? I don't know," said Wilbur. "Maybe it has. You think of guys like Dick Jauron (the former Swampscott great who is now the head coach of the Buffalo Bills) and Anthony Palmer (Winthrop High, then UMass Amherst). It's probably been done, but I can't say for sure. I haven't seen it myself."

Chernovetz and the Marblehead Magicians have seen it and they have the videotape to prove it. Reviewing it will leave a bad taste in their mouths, but Bailey has a way of doing that to a lot of teams.

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