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## Panthers end 12-year fishing party

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Thursday, November 16, 2006 - Updated: **05:40 PM EST**

It's a good thing the Beverly High football team has another seven days before it plays another game.

That might give the Panthers enough time to come down off the emotional high of their thrilling 20-18 win over Gloucester on Nov. 10.

The game was still in doubt until the referees signaled that Gloucester fullback Andrew Fulford had failed on his attempt to reach the end zone on the final play of the game.

It was Gloucester's third straight crack at scoring from the 1-yard-line. Each time, the Beverly defense came up big.

"It was total team defensive play," Beverly coach Dan Bauer said. "On the very last play, the defensive line came off hard. Nate Verry really hit the kid on that last play."

It was Beverly's first win at Gloucester since 1994, and it was a thrilling conclusion to a thrilling game between two one-loss teams.

Pat Bailey scored two touchdowns in the first quarter, but Gloucester scored a TD in each of the first three quarters to take an 18-13 lead.

The score remained 18-13 into the final minutes, when the Beverly defense made its first significant stand, forcing a punt deep inside Gloucester territory. Bauer set in the punt block unit, but the Fishermen made it easier than that. The snap sailed over the head of punter Cam Scola, who was dragged down on the 2-yard-line. On the next play, Bailey stormed into the end zone, and Liazar Cuko's extra point gave Beverly a 20-18 lead with 1:12 to play.

Gloucester returned the kickoff to the 30-yard-line, and some completions and a pass interference penalty brought the ball all the way to the Beverly 1.

The Fishermen failed on the extra point after their first touchdown, and then missed a pair of two-point conversions. With the bad snap on the punt still fresh in his mind, Gloucester coach Paul Ingram didn't think he had any choice but to go for the touchdown.

On first down, Bryan Sanborn tried a quarterback sneak. Denied.

On second down, Sanbron tried another QB sneak. Denied again.

After Sanborn's second sneak, the Beverly players rushed the field as the scoreboard clock read 0:00. But the officials gave Gloucester its final timeout with one second left, allowing for one more play.

The Fishermen gave it to Fulford. Beverly would have none of it.




"It was a true defining moment of the program," Bauer said. "I couldn't be more proud of them. Those last couple plays and ending the game there, that goes back to all the hard work they've put into the program -- the lifting, the conditioning, all the preparation over the years, how hard the players have practiced. All their work came to fruition in that last part (of the game). To see the rewards of all that effort is the true defining moment."

Bailey finished with 193 yards on 17 carries. His first touchdown was a 63-yard dash, and his second score, from 19 yards, came on a drive that was mostly his doing.

Gloucester bottled up Bailey and the Beverly offense for most of the second half, but when it came to crunch time, the Panthers took advantage of their chances.






"I was happy for our kids, they put it together," Bauer said. "They never gave in, never gave up. It was unbelievable. It really was. It was a heck of a game."

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bh.heraldinteractive.com: www.townonline.com: 0.042604:Thu, 16 Nov 2006 22:40:14 GMT