



## Beverly hopes last week was a good bye

### Moving The Chains

Salem News

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When last we saw them two weeks ago, the Beverly High football team was getting onto its bus for the long ride back to the Garden City after being manhandled by a powerhouse Winthrop squad.

Now, rested and ready to return to the gridiron, the Panthers are looking forward to getting back into the swing of things when they host Danvers tomorrow (2:30 p.m.) at Hurd Stadium.

Many of the Beverly players will take SAT tests during the morning, then head over to the North Shore's best venue for watching football in the afternoon, lace up their cleats and don their new pumpkin-orange jersey tops, all in hopes of getting back into the W column.

"The bye week came at a good time for us," noted Beverly head coach **Dan Bauer**, whose team takes a 3-1 mark into tomorrow's contest. "It gave us a chance not only to get healthy and rest up, but also for us coaches to re-evaluate our personnel on both offense and defense. We also got a chance to see how our younger guys and middle-of-the-road guys have been progressing."

The biggest question in Pantherland is the health of tailback **Pat Bailey**. The senior captain and team's franchise player had averaged exactly nine yards a carry through Beverly's first three games - all wins - while rushing for 531 yards and seven touchdowns (9 altogether).

But Bailey was limited by both a rolled ankle and an extremely pursuant Winthrop defense two Fridays ago, picking up just 51 yards on nine carries in the first half before leaving the game for good to rest his ankle. It marked the first time in 14 games, dating back to the 2004 season, that Bailey had not scored a touchdown in a game.

There were rumors throughout Beverly that Bailey's sprained ankle would prevent him from playing tomorrow, but Bauer squashed that speculation.

"The week off was good for him. Everything is going good; he'll be ready to go," said Bauer.

During their time off, the Panthers worked on facets of their game they might not get to spend as much time as they'd like doing during a normal practice week: goal line offense, red zone attack, even technique on special teams. In that sense, Bauer looked at the last week-and-a-half as a "mini-preseason."

It has also allowed some talented sophomores to step to the forefront and prove that they're not only ready for varsity action, but thirsting for more of it. Leading that parade is outside linebacker **Rashad Sims**, a 5-foot-11, 175-pounder who has played well rotating in. He's also been in the Beverly backfield late in games, picking up an impressive 32 yards on just two carries.

Sophomore lineman **Tom Cacciola**, who checks in at 6-2 and 215 pounds, has also been practicing well and figures to see more time on Saturdays.

Bauer views today's game against Danvers as a critical one in the Panthers season. While the Falcons record (2-3) may not be imposing, Bauer said it's misleading; that Danvers is perfectly capable of burning teams if allowed to chew up the clock and grind out yardage.

Particularly dangerous, said Bauer, is senior fullback **Colin Lynch**. The 6-foot, 175-pounder, who is a sprinter on the Falcons track and field teams during the winter and spring months, has 673 yards and four touchdowns on 105 carries this fall. On passing situations, he's also the team's de facto quarterback.

"They're a tough team to prepare for because they run that (Single-Wing) offense that no other team in the state has. It's difficult to get your demo guys (i.e., scout team) to emulate that," Bauer said. "It's based on timing and coordination to run those plays, and Danvers runs it well - Lynch especially. With his speed, you have to account for him every single play he's on the field."

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Me thinks **Jim O'Leary** and his **St. John's Prep** coaching staff spent quite a bit of time working with their players on pass defense this past week, getting ready for tomorrow's home game with **St. John's of Shrewsbury** (2:30 p.m., at Cronin Field). Whether or not the Pioneers (3-2) are a pass-happy team is irrelevant; the host Eagles (4-1) have to shore that area of their defense after getting torched for 349 yards and six touchdown passes by Dracut QB **Bobby Russo** in last week's 40-35 upset loss to the Middies.

Shrewsbury has lost two of its last three games, falling to Central Mass. power Leominster and the mighty Shamrocks of Bishop Feehan. After a 24-6 opening-day win over Malden Catholic, the Pioneers' last four games have all been decided by eight points or less.

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A look at what's on tap in this, the midway point of the high school gridiron calendar:

**Marblehead** (2-3) hosts a 5-0 **Winthrop** juggernaut tonight that it has not beaten since 1998. It may seem like ancient history to today's players, but the Magicians actually prevailed in this series for nine straight seasons from 1984-92. Since then, the Vikings have captured 11 of the last 13 encounters and lead the all-time series, 42-35-5.

**Salem**, which lost to **Bishop Fenwick** when the two teams first met a year ago in Peabody (28-13), will be looking for a measure of revenge tonight (7) when it hosts the Crusaders at Bertram Field. Fenwick (4-1) comes in winners of four straight; Salem will be looking to reverse its fortunes after suffering a 6-0 loss to Gloucester last Friday, its first in four games this fall.

Good game tonight in the Cape Ann League, with the two teams who could be going to the playoffs. **Masconomet** (Large division) and **Ipswich** (Small division) meet tonight in Boxford (7). The visiting Tigers come in unbeaten (5-0), but host Masconomet, which gave unbeaten Winthrop its best game (42-21) and blanked a tough Wilmington club on the road last Friday (21-0), is the favorite. Ipswich leads the series, 27-16-2, but has dropped six of the last eight between the two schools.

In five previous tries, **Hamilton-Wenham** has never won at **Wilmington**. The Generals will try to reverse that trend tonight when first-year head coach **Andrew Morency** takes his 3-1 club to face running back **Rich Barry** and the 3-2 Wildcats.

**Waltham**, which plays at winless **Peabody** tonight (7), is one of the few teams to hold a series edge over the Tanners, albeit by the slimmest of margins (9-8). The visiting Hawks will be looking to drop Peabody to 0-5 for the first time since 1967.

Since their first meeting way back in 1902, it took **Danvers** 64 years to beat rival **Beverly** five times. Now - unthinkable to many BHS fans - the Falcons have beaten the Black and Orange in each of the past five seasons. The host Panthers will be looking to end that stretch tomorrow at Hurd Stadium (2:30 p.m.) in the 69th meeting between the two teams. Beverly still leads the all-time series, 48-18-2.

A strong 40-0 victory over Revere last week put **Swampscott** (2-3) back on the right track. The Big Blue hope to put forth a similar effort against another winless opponent, **Saugus** (0-4), tomorrow (2:30 p.m.) at Blocksidge Field. Swampscott has won five straight against the Sachems and lead the all-time series, 37-28-7.

Old friend **Al Costabile**, the head coach at Bishop Fenwick in the mid 1990s, brings his **Shawsheen** Rams into Middleton tomorrow (2 p.m.) to face **North Shore Tech**. Shawsheen has won four straight since an opening-day loss to Arlington Catholic, having piled up nearly 30 points per game. The host Bulldogs (2-3) will be looking to avoid their first two-game losing streak this fall with a strong performance.

*Moving The Chains, a column on high school football on the North Shore, will appear each Friday in The Salem News during the fall sports season. Contact sports editor Phil Stacey at 978-338-2650, or by e-mail at pstacey@ecnnews.com.*

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