

High School

Friday night site

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BEVERLY, MASS. - It's not quite Bill Belichick and Eric Mangini meeting back up, but when Beverly and Marblehead square off on the gridiron tomorrow night it will be a reunion of sorts for Dan Bauer and Doug Chernovetz.

Chernovetz, in his third year as head coach at Marblehead, was one of Bauer's assistants at Beverly in 2004.

"Dan Bauer does a great job over there, and in his fifth year over there the kids are starting to really buy in to his program," Chernovetz said Tuesday. "A lot of what they've accomplished, I'm trying to carry over to this program. This game is significant to me, but every game is significant to me. It would be special to beat Beverly after being there. I have a lot of respect for Dan. He taught me a lot, so it would always be nice to beat your mentor."

Bauer, while laughing off the Belichick-Mangini comparison, said he values his friendship with Chernovetz, but realizes both coaches will be focusing on winning once they hit the field.

"Doug's a great guy, and everyone loves him here," Bauer said. "He's obviously a friend of mine, but when push comes to shove and we're on the field, I think we'll be worried about stopping each other, not our friendship."

Truth is both Bauer and Chernovetz have much more to worry about than their post-game handshake.

The Panthers are winners of three straight games and lead the Northeastern Conference Small division with a 2-0 mark. Marblehead hasn't been able to win two games in a row at any point this season, but sports a similar 4-3 mark, beating Danvers last week for its first Small division win.

For Bauer, the Panthers are entering their second season.

"This is the second season for us, it's when things really get down to crunch time and we need to focus on every snap, every quarter, and every opponent, in that order," Bauer said. "Everyone's fighting for a win now, and you can't take a single play off."

The Panthers will likely rely heavily on star senior running back Greg Pierce again, who rushed for 221 yards and three touchdowns in a 19-14 win over Saugus last weekend.

But Bauer said the play of his special teams units will be just as critical.

"It could very well be a field position game," Bauer said. "We're going to need to minimize mistakes, avoid turnovers, and give ourselves good field position. We need to execute on offense and defense, but special teams is going to play a huge role in the game, too."

Defensively, the Panthers will need to key on Marblehead senior running back Michael Sahagian, a punishing runner that can burst between the tackles or bounce it outside for big gains.

"They do a lot of the same things well that we do," Bauer said. "If we can slow down their running game and find a way to grind it out with ours, that's a start. But we need to play to our speed, to our level in all three facets of the game."

The Magicians haven't beaten the Panthers in a while. During Bauer's five-year tenure, most games haven't been close. But with Marblehead rolling out new uniforms and playing under the lights at home, Bauer knows Beverly's in for a challenge.

"Every game is a challenge in this league," Bauer said. "It'll be an exciting game under the lights, but again, we can't let outside factors mess with us too much. We have to focus on making plays and managing our assignments."

Chernovetz said he doesn't think he'll need to give his team any special pre-game speech.

"You play for games like this," Chernovetz said. "Traditionally, Beverly's beaten up on Marblehead. This is the last chance for our seniors to turn the tables. If that doesn't get you jacked up, under the lights at home, then you need to check your pulse."

Beverly 19

Saugus 14

Beverly's defense held a vaunted Saugus option attack to only 120 yards of total offense, and the Panthers offense wracked up more than 300 yards in a 19-14 win last week.

Saugus entered the game with a better record (4-1 overall) than the Panthers (3-3 overall), but couldn't stop Beverly senior running back Greg Pierce, who ran for 221 yards and three touchdowns. On the season, Pierce has run for more than 1,100 yards.

"By and large, I thought we played good assignment football," Bauer said. "We didn't capitalize as much with our offensive opportunities as I would have liked, but we got the job done in the end."

Saugus jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the first quarter before Pierce scored on runs of 7 and 40 yards in the second quarter. Llazar Cuko converted one of his point after attempts, giving Beverly a 13-7 lead.

Pierce made it 19-7 in the third quarter when he broke free for a 10-yard touchdown run, and Saugus added a late touchdown in the fourth quarter to make it 19-14.

"Overall it was a good game for us," Bauer said. "We've won three in a row, and now we just need to focus on continuing to get better."

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I know both of these coaches but if i said to say who has the advantage it would have to be coach bauer and the panthers this game will be going right down to the wire and we will see who merges out victorious tommorow night

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