



Small school showdown, huge implications

By Mike Grenier , Staff Writer
Salem News

High School Football Game of the Week:

Beverly at Swampscott

Beverly (5-3, 3-0 NEC Small) at Swampscott (7-1, 2-0 NEC Small)

Saturday at Blocksidge Field, 2:30 p.m.

What's at stake

With the new two-tier system in the Northeastern Conference, there's a high probability that the winner of this game will secure a spot in the postseason playoffs. If Beverly triumphs, it would clinch its first league championship in 19 years. If Swampscott comes through Saturday, it still must beat divisional foes Danvers and Marblehead to claim the crown - but those two teams have a combined record of 4-12 heading into this weekend.

3 keys to victory

Beverly

- 1. Eliminate - or at least limit - Swampscott's big plays.** Big Blue quarterback Peter Kinchley has thrown for 1,158 yards, and the team's spread offense is capable of scoring from anyplace on the field. Beverly's pass defense hasn't seen anything like it all year, so this will be a supreme test for its pass rushers and the secondary. You'd have to think that fatigue could play into it in the second half, so Beverly must find a way to keep fresh bodies out there.
- 2. Finish off long drives,** which is another way of saying the best defense against a team like Swampscott is your offense. With Greg Pierce (1,223 yards) and Rashad Sims (102 yards in last week's win over Marblehead) in the backfield and sophomore Mark Theriault improving as a passer, Beverly is indeed capable of chewing up the clock and keeping Swampscott's offense off the gridiron.
- 3. Maintain good field position.** Even if some of their drives stall, the Panthers can help themselves immensely by pinning Swampscott deep in its own territory with solid play by their special teams. As is the case with any high school team, the more plays you have to make on offense, the more prone you are to making a mistake.

Swampscott

- 1. Bottle up Beverly's running game.** If Pierce and Sims are allowed to pound away like they did last week when they combined for over 200 yards against Marblehead, Swampscott's defense will be drained by the second half. Swampscott

coach Steve Dembowski is concerned about Beverly's balanced running attack and adds that its offensive line is doing a great job at the point of attack. Swampscott has had a tendency to allow teams to move the ball between the 20s, but it must tighten up in this game.

2. Win the turnover battle. Swampscott has had just nine turnovers in eight games, but Dembowski has seen how damaging it can be when his team loses the ball. The Big Blue had three turnovers against Lynn English, and the Bulldogs eventually turned two of them into two touchdowns in a shaky 21-20 Swampscott win. Swampscott also threw two end zone interceptions in a 21-14 loss to undefeated Gloucester.

3. Get the ball to the playmakers. Swampscott has a ton of them. Kinchley has completed passes to 10 different players - and five of them have nine or more receptions. The Big Blue also have three players who've rushed for 185 or more yards, including Kinchley himself. All of this can be extremely confusing to an opposing defense. Swampscott hopes that will be the case this week.

Individual Leaders

Scoring

Beverly

Player TD-PA-PTS

Greg Pierce 13 0 78

Rashad Sims 5 0 30

Llazar Cuko 0 16 16

Swampscott

Player TD-PA-PTS

#Matt Barbuzzi 0 19 25

Peter Kinchley 4 0 24

Steve Moran 4 0 24

Kyle Shonio 3 1 20

#includes two field goals

Rushing Yards

Beverly

Player Att. Yds. TDs

Greg Pierce 149 1,223 12

Rashad Sims 44 339 5

Dave Patnaude 14 52 1

Swampscott

Player Att. Yds. TDs

Kyle Shonio 65 378 3

Ilya Levin 33 212 1

Peter Kinchley 70 189 4

Shawn Hubauer 15 70 1

Passing Yards

Beverly

Player Comp. Att. Yards

Mark Theriault 16 30 187

Mark Hannable 3 11 65

Swampscott

Player Comp. Att. Yards

Peter Kinchley 82 171 1,158

Receiving Yards

Beverly

Player No. Yds. TDs

Sean Deady 10 127 1

Greg Pierce 2 50 0

Pat Abate 3 29 1

Swampscott

Player No. Yds. TDs

Justin Mitchell 23 335 3

Trevor Wheeler 19 333 3

Steve Moran 9 194 4

Jordan Kelly 10 104 0

Kyle Shonio 11 77 0

Did you know?

This shapes up as the most meaningful Beverly-Swampscott game since 1988, when both teams went into their Week 9 clash with perfect 8-0 records. Beverly thumped Swampscott, 34-14, finished 10-0 and played in the Division 2 Super Bowl at Foxboro. Ironically, this year's schoolboy Super Bowl games will be played at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro ... **Rashad Sims**, who plays safety and outside linebacker for Beverly, had 13 tackles against Marblehead last week while sophomore linebacker **Nick Kozlowski** had eight tackles in his first start ... Sophomore **Curtis Manuel** and seniors **Liam Blodgett** and **Brian Kureta** have also been defensive stalwarts for Beverly. They've also gotten a boost from **Chris Bushey**, who was back for the Marblehead game after missing several games with a leg injury ... **Shawn Hubauer** (48 tackles, including 35 solo), **Justin Mitchell** (44), **Ilya Levin** (42) and **Mike DePippo** (40) are the leading tacklers for the Big Blue ... Swampscott has a 16-9 takeaway/turnover ratio. The Big Blue defense has produced eight interceptions and eight fumble recoveries, and **Adam McSwiggin** returned one of those fumbles 57 yards for a touchdown against Winchester ... Beverly kicker **Llazar Cuko** was 4 for 4 in extra point attempts against Marblehead ... Bishop Fenwick's stupendous running back, **Bobby Tarr**, needed 37 carries to get 199 yards against Swampscott. He had 42 yards in one carry and the rest were under 10 yards as Swampscott won, 22-8 ... The Big Blue offense had the ball for 75 plays against Saugus - but they barely won, 23-19.

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