



## Panthers fall to Winthrop, see NEC title dreams disappear

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November 14, 2008 11:30 pm

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WINTHROP — The Beverly High football team needed to win last night in Winthrop to have any hope of winning the Northeastern Conference Small championship.

Chris Beranger and the host Vikings made sure that didn't happen.

Beranger, Winthrop's all-star tailback, rushed for 150 yards and a touchdown as Winthrop knocked off Beverly, 22-13, in the fog at Miller Field, ending the Panthers' hopes of winning their first NEC crown in 20 years.

"You know, it's just really unfortunate that we came up short tonight," said Beverly head coach Dan Bauer. "They came out flying and really came after us."

The loss gave Beverly a final NEC Small record of 3-2, with losses to Winthrop and league-leading Marblehead. The Panthers (7-3 overall) have one final game remaining, at home against Salem on Thanksgiving Day.

"I couldn't be prouder of the way my guys played tonight," Winthrop (5-5) head coach Sean Driscoll said. "That's a very good Beverly team we played tonight — and we still prevailed."

The Panthers came out flat early on and it came back to bite them when Beranger busted in from the 10-yard line in the first quarter.

Beverly rebounded nicely after having their punt blocked back to their own 20-yard line. Senior workhorse Rashad Sims (13 carries, 84 yards) found paydirt with a 45-yard scoring run.

"Blocking a punt always changes the complexion of a game, but we came back and never gave up," Bauer noted. "I'm proud of the ways my guys played."

Winthrop quarterback Will Milano would orchestrate a 15-play, 72-yard drive and call his own number at the one and put Winthrop up 14-7 at the half.

"I feel like we had a good week of passing, but just could not pull things together in the second half," Bauer said.

The Vikings would keep things rolling in the second half when Milano found Dan Ramos for a 60-yard strike at the end of the third to make it 22-7 after a successful 2-point conversion.

"That really hurt," Bauer said of Winthrop's third and final touchdown. "We were kind of sputtering out there after that."

The Panthers weren't completely dead, though. Quarterback Mark Hannable did his best to get them back in the game when he found Steven Dubois in the middle of the end zone from 21 yards out late in the fourth quarter. The ensuing 2-point attempt was fumbled away, though, and Beverly never came close to scoring again.

"My guys never quit," said Bauer. "Now it's time to reflect on this and prepare ourselves for Salem."

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