



Pass-happy Panthers upset Lynn Classical

Phil Stacey

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— BEVERLY — Shhh. Don't let the secret out that the Beverly High football team is for real this season.

"I don't mind flying under the radar all season; I wouldn't mind going through the whole season that way," said Beverly High captain Rashad Sims, who caught three touchdown passes from junior quarterback Mark Hannable Saturday as the Panthers upset favored Lynn Classical, in their home opener at sunny Hurd Stadium.

Three of Beverly's four touchdowns came off of Classical turnovers as the hosts put up 14 points in both the first and fourth quarters, never trailing. In doing so, the Panthers completed a rare season sweep of the two Northeastern Conference schools from Lynn, having blanked Lynn English, 6-0, in their season opener.

"I think Classical may have been surprised by our speed and our size," said Hannable, a 16-year-old junior QB who completed 10-of-15 passes for 116 yards and three scores Saturday. "I think we're for real."

Who can remember the last time Beverly High — which for decades might as well have been called Running Back U — threw for three TDs in a single game? But in its new spread offense, where as many as four and five receivers line up wide on a given play, the pass is a valuable weapon.

Sims, the team's starting tailback, is a key part of the air attack, too. Swinging out of the backfield, he caught scoring tosses of 10, 8 and 6 yards. Curtis Manuel (2 INTs) added a final score on a 28-yard interception return with 1:11 to play, and Louis George successfully kicked four extra points.

Beverly's defense was up to the task as well, allowing one 95-yard scoring drive but otherwise forcing four Ram turnovers. Senior Jamie Wolkiewicz' fumble recovery deep in Classical's end led to Beverly's first score, and junior Randy Jones blocked a punt that led to another TD.

Junior defensive tackle Theritchnide Roc also fell on a Rams' fumble, Nick Kozlowski had a drive-killing sack while captain Joe SantaMaria, Peter Kallas and Ben Comeau all unofficially had seven tackles.

Beverly's greatest test to date comes this Friday on the road at Newell Stadium against defending NEC North and Super Bowl champion Gloucester, who take a 16-game winning streak into the contest. The Panthers were the last team to defeat them, 20-18, on Nov. 10, 2006.

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