



Plenty is at stake for Beverly, Gloucester

By Matt Jenkins

staff writer

September 25, 2008 12:16 am

—

In the age of split conferences and multiple Super Bowl berths, very rarely is the third game on the schedule terribly meaningful.

High school football teams usually don't reach the important part of their schedules (i.e. games that count toward the postseason) until the second half of the season.

You can throw that theory out the window for the Beverly and Gloucester matchup tomorrow night at Newell Stadium. Although the Panthers and Fishermen play in different levels of the Northeastern Conference, this game has meaning.

"They're the defending Super Bowl (Division 2A) champs and they've beaten two good opponents (Winthrop and Masconomet)," Beverly coach Dan Bauer said. "They're hitting on all cylinders. They do different things with their running game and they can pass too. Defensively they're really tough. They're an excellent team."

So is Beverly.

The Panthers have been very impressive so far this year, registering wins over NEC Large teams Lynn English (6-0) and Lynn Classical (28-6).

A win over Gloucester will springboard Beverly to the top of the NEC Small contenders list .

Of course, Bauer knows that kind of talk means nothing when his team puts the pads on and hits the field. He's far more concerned with what the Panthers can handle on their own.

"I think we still have a lot of room for improvement," Bauer said. "I am happy with the effort and the attitude. We always look to be physical and play as hard as we can. We've had some players step up and we did have some players who were returning from last year. There's still a lot of work to be done."

Beverly moved to a spread offense this season and so far it has paid dividends.

Senior running back Rashad Sims has been a force, rushing for 189 yards and one touchdown and catching five passes for 33 yards and three scores.

Quarterback Mark Hannable has also looked good, completing 11-of-21 passes for 135 yards and three TDs.

The Panthers will need big games from both players to have a chance against Gloucester.

"We want to capitalize on any positives and minimize our mistakes. That certainly will be a key to the game," Bauer said. "Defensively, it's the same thing. We have to be sound and stay even keeled. There will be good plays and bad plays and we'll try to level it out in between."

Bauer has liked the play of Ben Comeau on the defensive line so far, as well as linebackers Nick Kozlowski, Peter Kallas, Scott Megrath and Steve Dubois.

Stopping the potent Gloucester offense will be difficult.

Connor Ressel (28 carries, 164 yards, 3 TDs), Taylor Burbine (10 -121-0), Luis Hernandez (24-121-2) and Ross Carlson (7-102-0) have each done damage out of the backfield for the Fishermen.

Quarterback Ricky Gallant (7-for-18 passing, 177 yards) is an experienced signal caller for Gloucester.

"The QB does a nice job of running the offense and he throws a good ball and manages things well," Bauer said. "Their running game is dangerous because a number of backs can hurt you. Their trap game is excellent as always. The offense is precise and they don't make mistakes."

Gloucester has won 16 straight games. Coincidentally, the last time the Fishermen lost was to Beverly, 20-18, the game before Thanksgiving in 2006.

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

Photos



Beverly senior running back Rashad Sims (30), shown here avoiding a diving tackle attempt by Swampscott's Ryan Squires during a 2007 game, hopes to lead Beverly past defending Super Bowl champion Gloucester this weekend. Staff Photo



Beverly's Mark Hannable tries to break a tackle by Lynn Classical's Darrell Lane during a recent game. Staff Photographer