



Sims' touchdown helps Beverly pin loss on Lynn English

By Mike Grenier

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LYNN — Lynn English came into last night's game licking its chops in anticipation of being a legitimate contender in the Northeastern Conference this season.

But the Bulldogs went home licking their wounds.

Playing the kind of smashmouth football that caused four turnovers and getting an offensive spark from speedy senior running back Rashad Sims, who scored the game's lone touchdown, Beverly High pulled the upset, 6-0, in steady rain at Manning Field.

"This kind of rates at the top for us," said junior Mark Hannable, who managed the game beautifully for Beverly on a night when the ball was slick and hard to handle. "This is a good way to start the season, to go (on the road) and beat a good team like this."

This was a tense, nerve-racking game that wasn't settled until the final 45 seconds.

Leading 6-0, Beverly milked the clock for all it was worth in the final five minutes, and the Panthers got help from a costly face mask penalty by Lynn English with 2:12 left, giving Beverly an automatic first down.

Still, Beverly had to punt with less than a minute remaining, giving a very athletic Lynn English team a sliver of a chance. However, the Bulldogs muffed the punt, and Beverly's Scott Megrath recovered the fumble. It was strictly academic after that, with Hannable taking a knee to run out the clock.

"I think we were the underdogs," said Sims, who finished with 127 yards on 15 carries. "But we like flying under the radar like this."

Beverly deserved this one for its tenacity and for its intelligent play on both sides of the ball. The Panthers hounded and punished Lynn English quarterback Jesse Fowler, an exceptionally fast runner who was limited to 65 yards on 23 carries. Beverly knocked him for a loss on eight different occasions. And just when it appeared that English would tie or go ahead in the fourth quarter, Fowler fumbled the exchange from center at the Beverly two-yard line and Sims covered the loose ball.

Earlier in the game, Dylan Terry had two interceptions for Beverly.

"We were a bend-but-not-break defense tonight," Beverly coach Dan Bauer said. "We played well in all three phases — offense, defense and special teams."

Beverly appeared to be the team that was in trouble in the second quarter, when it was backed up in the shadow of its own end zone, but the Panthers put together a seven-play, 93-yard drive. Sims got them out of a hole with a 38-yard run, seemingly energizing the entire team. Sims answered the bell again, running up the gut of the English defense and bowling over the last defender at the five to close out his 25-yard scoring run with 4:45 left in the half.

Lynn English had a great chance to tie it before the half ended, but the Panthers came up with a goal line stand at the four-yard line and the Bulldogs trailed despite a 17-play drive.

"That was humongous," Bauer said. "It can be a killer for either team when that happens. It's a big momentum thing if you stop them."

Beverly stopped them all night and went home feeling very good about itself.

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