

Beverly-Salem football notebook: Successful end to the decade for Panthers

By Phil Stacey
SPORTS EDITOR

November 26, 2009 11:30 pm

SALEM — Yesterday's Thanksgiving Day victory marked more than just the end of another successful season for the Beverly High football team.

It also put a definitive stamp on the end of two very different segments of Panther football over the last decade.

By finishing the year with a 7-3 mark, Beverly completed its fourth straight winning season. Add in its 5-5 season in 2005, and the Black and Orange were a very respectable 34-18 in the second half of this decade.

That's a far cry from the turn of the century, when Beverly stumbled and had five straight seven-loss campaigns. Their aggregate record from 2000-04 was 18-35.

Overall, that still gives the Panthers a sub-.500 mark (52-53) for the decade. But it's clear things have been headed in the right direction for some time now, and there's no reason to believe the 2010 season and beyond won't continue their recent winning ways.

"There are some juniors on this team you look at and you already know they're leaders. They don't have to be captains for that," said Beverly's Curtis Manuel, a senior captain who had a 64-yard touchdown catch and an interception in his final high school game yesterday.

"We've got guys like (guard and nose tackle) George Kallas, a two-year starter; Joe Wioncek at middle linebacker; Andy Brown and Chris Mitchell at wide receiver; and (defensive end) Tony McDonald. He never gets any notice, but he's like third on the team in tackles. And those are just some of the leaders."

Senior running back Dylan Terry, who capped his career with a pair of TD runs yesterday, agreed with Manuel's assessment of the Panthers who will be back next fall.

"Not only do we have a lot of good juniors, but sophomores, too," said the 18-year-old. "The future looks good."

~*~*~

It was a difficult end of the decade for Salem, however. With a 2-9 finish this fall, the Witches ended the decade at 30-77 overall.

They did not have a single winning season in the 2000s (although they went 5-5 in both 2000 and 2006). It was Salem's first losing decade since the 1950s.

~*~*~

An interesting play that happened late in the second quarter: Beverly quarterback Mark Hannable hit slot receiver Steve Dubois in stride for a 19-yard gain. But Dubois was hit hard by a Salem defensive back and coughed up the ball — which bounced into the oncoming arms of an opportunistic Panther teammate, Justin Marrs. He promptly ran another 21 yards with the ball before being tackled, giving his team a 40-yard gain on a fumbled play.

Marrs, a Salem News and Northeastern Conference all-star, added a touchdown grab of 13 yards late in the fourth quarter. He finished the season with team highs in catches (33), yards (617) and TD passes caught (9).

~*~*~

Unofficially, Salem's sublime junior linebacker, NEC Large Defensive Player of the Year Antonio Reyes, led all players with 13 tackles. Cornerback Nate Staples was in on seven others, while fellow junior Joey Dinh had an interception to highlight an overall terrific day at safety.

For Beverly, captain Nick Kozlowski, the NEC Small Co-Defensive Player of the Year, led the Panthers with eight tackles from his inside backer post. Manuel, a free safety, and outside linebacker Theritchnide Roc added six stops apiece, with Hannable causing a fumble.

~*~*~

Salem held a slight edge in time of possession (22:47 to 21:13), but the Panthers had more first downs (15 to 12) ... Salem was penalized seven times for 61 yards; Beverly was whistled for six infractions totalling 57 yards ... Panther junior Jake Abate recovered a Salem fumble off a fumble ... Edwin Guzman had a 67-yard kickoff return for the hosts ... Dan Bauer Sr. came in from St. Louis to watch his son's BHS team prevail ... Beverly's victory increased its all-time series lead to 54-49-7. The Black and Orange have won six of the last seven games and seven of the last nine contests.

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

Photos



Beverly's Nick Theriault sprints for yardage against Salem. Staff Photographer