

## On Football column: Beverly learns a hard lesson in dominant football from Gloucester

By Phil Stacey  
Sports editor

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On Football

Phil Stacey

BEVERLY — It was one play out of the 92 that were run by both teams yesterday afternoon at Hurd Stadium. And to be completely honest, it probably would not have affected the final outcome of this game.

But in reality, that one play encapsulated the entire afternoon — especially for the host team, the Beverly Panthers.

The Orange-and-Black had just survived a 16-play drive that ate more than nine minutes off the clock, holding the visiting Fishermen on 4th-and-8. Now, Beverly was faced with first down from its own 9-yard line with 36 seconds to go until the break.

Logic dictated that the hosts would have quarterback Joe Wioncek take a knee, go into the locker room, regroup and make the necessary adjustments in preparation for the second half.

But after a one-yard loss by halfback Dylan Terry, the Panthers had other ideas. They figured they might catch Gloucester off guard with a long pass — maybe even get behind the secondary and get on the scoreboard before intermission.

It didn't exactly work out that way.

Gloucester defensive back Conor Ressel picked off Wioncek's pass down the right sidelines with an acrobatic play on the 40-yard line, then returned it 25 yards. Two plays later, Ressel took a waggles pass in the left flat and scamped into the end zone from 13 yards out untouched as time ran out in the half. The Fishermen also successfully ran in a two-point conversion, giving them a 21-point advantage.

Game, set, match.

"If I could have taken one (play) back and sit on it going into halftime, that would be the one," said Beverly head coach Dan Bauer, whose team suffered its first loss, 41-0.

"I'll take the blame for that one. The bottom line is we took a shot — and it didn't happen."

Gloucester (4-0) dominated from the get-go and never took its foot off the gas — especially on defense, where they turned in a virtually perfect performance against the Panthers' spread offense.

The Fishermen held Beverly to — and this is not a misprint — *eight yards* of total offense. Stacking the box with as many as eight and nine defenders, they swarmed to the ball immediately and were often in the Beverly backfield as fast as the football got there. The end result was the Panthers had 11 rushing attempts the entire game for minus-20 yards.

The visitors held the Panthers to 23 plays on offense; held a commanding margin in time of possession (31:37 of the game's 44 minutes) and had 19 first downs as compared to three for the hosts (2 of which came because of Gloucester penalties). They also picked off three Beverly passes and recovered a fumble.

"We weren't going to rush just three guys at them (as Lynn English had done the previous week). We used all kinds of schemes and came at them aggressively," said Gloucester coach Paul Ingram, whose squad has scored 143 points while allowing a mere 28 in four blowout wins this season.

"We wanted to put a lot of pressure on the quarterback. Against our blitz, (the QB) has to use his hot reads to make it work — but we didn't give him much time to do that."

Beverly got inside enemy territory once the entire afternoon, reaching the Gloucester 49-yard line late in the third quarter. But the next play was fumbled and went for a 17-yard loss.

"We were fired up playing an undefeated team. We didn't want to lost to a top (Northeastern Conference) Small team like last season," said Gloucester's Ressel, who finished with three touchdowns total (2 rushing) and 92 yards in addition to his interception.

"We were very well prepared for their spread (offense). It's nothing we haven't seen before. The secondary wanted to prove that we are a strong unit."

It was Beverly's worst loss since falling to Billerica by the same 41-0 score on Opening Day 2001.

Now the Panthers (2-1) have to a short week of practice before heading to Manning Field Friday night for their first road game of the season against Lynn Classical. They'll need to put this debacle out of their minds as quickly as possible, realizing there are still seven games left in the regular season — and one poor game shouldn't ruin it.

"There's a lesson to be learned in every game, every time you compete. It's our job to teach (them) and for all of us to learn from our mistakes," said Bauer.

"Sometimes, the obvious lessons go unsaid."

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Photos



Gloucester's Conor Ressel pushes his way past Beverly's Dylan Terry during yesterday's game held at Hurd Stadium. Thanks to three TDs by Ressel, Gloucester handed the Panthers a lopsided 41-0 loss. Staff Photographer