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Pierce scores five more touchdowns as Panthers rout Danvers, 47-0

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DANVERS — When Kenny Pierce gets past the line of scrimmage and darts into the secondary with no one between him and the goal line, there's only one thing the Beverly High running back has on his mind.

Don't get caught.

"All I can think of is if I don't score, it's going to look really bad," smiled the junior speedster.

While that thought was running through his mind, the mercurial Pierce was running by Danvers defenders to the tune of 266 yards and five touchdowns — on just nine carries.

In doing so, he guided Beverly High to a lopsided 47-0 win over the Falcons in the NEC/CAL Tier 2 opener for both teams at Deering Stadium.

Last night marked the second time *this season* that Pierce has scored five times in one game; he did so four weeks earlier at Lynn English. He found paydirt against Danvers on runs of 95, 18, 32, 46 and 53 yards, and now has 694 yards rushing and 10 TDs this fall.

"The holes were there again tonight ... bigger than they were against Lynn English," said Pierce. "We had a great practice week starting with a strong conditioning day on Monday, and that reflected on how we practiced all week."

This contest set several records last night, including most points scored by one team, biggest margin of victory and largest shutout in the 74-game series between Beverly and Danvers, which began in 1902. The Orange-and-Black hold a commanding 54-18-2 all-time series lead.

Coming off of a disappointing home loss to Masconomet in their final non-league tuneup last weekend, Beverly (now 5-2 overall) focused in practice on elements that didn't translate a week ago: flying to the football and gang-tackling defensively, and opening up holes and using their greatest strength — team speed — to full advantage.

In both instances, the changes to the Panthers' game plan worked to perfection. They rolled up 496 yards of total offense (all but 76 on the ground) and held Danvers to a mere 117 yards and five first

downs. The visitors also swarmed to the football at any and every opportunity defensively, never allowing Danvers to mount any serious scoring chances.

"They were more physical than us up front and their backs are as good as advertised," said Danvers (3-4) coach Sean Rogers. "The things they did differently this week definitely worked. They were beating us backside (defensively) and catching our ballcarrier on the opposite side before we could even get going.

"What they did well was take full advantage of their unbalanced line looks, and we didn't make the necessary adjustments. That's on me for not having us prepared enough for it."

On the Panthers' first play (following a 5-yard penalty), Pierce took a jet sweep left, followed a wall of linemen and took off upfield. Fullback and captain Nick Theriault threw some terrific downfield blocks up around the 50-yard line, allowing his teammate to fly into the end zone untouched for a quick 7-0 lead.

"We noticed that there was only one (cornerback) on the right side of their defense and let (offensive coordinator Roger) Day know about it," said Pierce. "Our linemen made that wall, I ran up alongside it and just kept going."

"Our line did a fantastic job all night," added Beverly head coach Dan Bauer, "and the downfield blocking of our backs was tremendous."

Danvers punted on its first five offensive possessions before time ran out in the first half on their sixth drive. In the meantime, Pierce scored on an 18-yard sweep and a pretty Statue of Liberty play (adroitly executed by quarterback Dave Rollins) that went 32 yards for another TD.

Before the half ended, Rollins also hit Brendan Flaherty in the right flat on a broken play, and the junior cut back against the grain and took it 44 yards to the house, giving Beverly a 27-0 lead at intermission.

Two more Pierce runs, of 46 and 53 yards, made it 40-0 after three, and backup Joey Kozlowski's 1-yard TD plunge in the fourth quarter accounted for the final score.

"This game was won in the weight room," said Bauer, giving credit to assistant coach Ben Goodhue's offseason workout program for his team. "A real weight room victory."