

Warrick's TD catch lit the fuse for Spartans

By Ken Weingartner

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Oct. 15: When Doug Warrick caught an 18-yard touchdown pass from Adam Riese two weeks ago to put the Steinert football team on the board in what became a 20-14 win over Hopewell Valley, it was more than a score.

It was a relief.

The Spartans opened the season by being shutout against Notre Dame and Hightstown. The failure to generate points was testing, but Steinert's offensive players never lost their focus. Last week, the Spartans jumped to a 14-0 lead with two second-quarter touchdowns against previously undefeated Princeton, and let the defense take over from there in a 14-7 victory to even their record at 2-2.

It was really frustrating, extremely frustrating," Warrick said about the early struggles. "We worked really hard in the off-season and preseason to get everything started and to come out the first two games and not score or have much yardage to show for it was really hard. I think our coaching staff kept our heads up and kept us going. We wanted to win, we wanted to turn it around and just do better.

"It was such a relief (to score). For me to score the first touchdown, it felt amazing."

Whether blocking or receiving, Warrick is a big factor in Steinert's offense. Literally. The junior tight end stands 6-foot-6 and weighs 190 pounds. He is already attracting attention from colleges, including Rutgers.

Last week, Warrick caught two passes for 31 yards and helped clear a path for a running game that netted nearly 200 yards. Judens Goimbert had 81 yards on 18 carries and Dan Danaso had 76 yards and a touchdown on nine carries to lead the Spartans' ground assault. "Blocking wise, I've done my best to support our great run game," Warrick said. "I love hitting, I love the intensity, I love catching a pass and making a play for the team, getting the team sparked up. I just want to continue to get better at everything – blocking, catching, running. I hope to get the ball a little more and make things happen and get first downs, get touchdowns, and continue to put points on the board.

"As a tight end, you've got to be able to block and catch. If you can make a block and the running back gets a first down, you continue to move the ball."

Steinert's win over Princeton proved it could beat a playoff-caliber team. The Tigers are currently ranked No. 2 in power points in Central Jersey Group III, with 61. This weekend, the Spartans face another top CJ Group III foe – and Colonial Valley Conference rival – in Lawrence. The Cardinals are 4-1 and ranked No. 3 in the section, just one point behind Princeton.

"It felt really good to beat Princeton," Warrick said. "I think we had confidence coming into the game that we could beat them. We have to keep that confidence up for the rest of the season. If we bring that confidence to every game and we play the way we're capable of playing, we can beat anybody.

"Lawrence is another really good team. We just need to execute and do everything the coaches have taught us and put into us. We need to have consistency and keep it going."

A win on Saturday against Lawrence would also boost Steinert's postseason aspirations. The Spartans are 10th in power points, with 40, in Central Jersey Group III and trail Freehold Borough (3-2) by seven points for the eighth and final playoff spot.

"I feel some teams might not respect us as much as they should," Warrick said. "If you're going to play us, you're going to have to bring your best game. We're going to play our best game and we're going to try our hardest to win. After the Princeton game, I think teams will

take a second look.”
All it took, were those first points.