



Andre Simmons bulls ahead for yardage against Trenton Saturday. Simmons rushed for over 100 yards as Nottingham broke the 40-point barrier for the third time this season. (Photo courtesy Mary E. Malone/northstarfootball.com.)

Nottingham tops Trenton for third straight victory

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

OCT. 17: Jon Adams made an observation that held as much truth as if he'd have said "two-plus-two equals four."

"We make it interesting, don't we?" the Nottingham High football coach said after the Northstars outlasted Trenton, 43-29, with another offensive explosion today.

In its past five games, Nottingham has had scoring outputs of 40, 14, 34, 41 and 43. The last three have produced victories, as the Northstars continue their climb from the hole of an 0-3 start.

In fact, the Northstar coaches used that start as motivation this week, so the players would not suffer a letdown after rallying from a 28-point deficit to beat Hamilton last Saturday.

"The coaches told us," noted running back Andre Simmons, "that if we lost today, all of that from last week would have been wiped away. So we just worked hard every day in practice and drill, drill, drill." Kind of like the coaches are drilling into the players how important each win becomes.

"We talked about where we're at in our season," Adams said. "The big thing we did is, we fell into the abyss. We were 0-3 and the only way we're going to the state playoffs now is to win out. We've gotten to 3-3, we still have the big monster in West Windsor (South, this Saturday). Sitting behind that is Ewing.

"If we can win those next two ballgames, we give ourselves a shot to get in, and that's what we're hanging on to."

Nottingham entered the week 11th in power points in Central Jersey Group III with 37, although four teams ahead of it had played one less game. But all the Northstars can do is keep trying to win and

see how it all shakes out.

"We had high expectations coming into the season," the coach said. "We've worked very hard. This is one of the hardest working groups I've ever had, starting with our seniors, Mark Newlin, Miguel Colon, right down the line.

"It just wasn't there at the beginning but now it's starting to hopefully come together. We understand we don't have to give up, we can compete with anybody and we can score with anybody."

They can indeed, score with anybody and in recent games they have had to outscore teams to win.

It was more of the same against Trenton, and Newlin was again up to the task.

The senior quarterback completed just seven of 16 passes, which looks kind of ordinary until one considers that three went for touchdowns. He also ran for 26 yards and two more touchdowns, giving him eight trips to the endzone this season.

But Nottingham doesn't live by its quarterback alone. Adam Devigili continued his steady campaign by grabbing two touchdown passes and two conversion passes, while Simmons rushed 23 times for 104 yards and a touchdown.

"Everybody's working together," Simmons said. "There's no selfishness on the team and we're all working hard in practice."

Newlin made it 6-0 on a two-yard run before Trenton scored on a 61-yard pass play for a 7-6 lead.

Robert Wiggs then caught a 24-yard touchdown pass and Devigili's conversion catch made it 14-7.

A muffed punt gave Trenton its second touchdown, but Nottingham came right back as Devigili caught an 11-yard scoring pass to push the lead to 21-13. Again, the Tornados came back to tie it but late in the half, Nottingham put together one more scoring drive capped by Devigili's TD catch to give Nottingham a 28-21 halftime advantage.

The third quarter became a flag fest with penalties everywhere before Simmons scored on a 32-yard run to end the period. But it took Trenton just four plays to get it back and it was 33-29 with nearly a whole quarter to go.

Midway through the fourth quarter Trenton moved to its 42, but on fourth-and-3 Wiggs dropped Tyrell McDuffie for a five-yard loss. Nottingham took advantage as Newlin scored again with 2:50 left to clinch it.

"Even though we haven't played well defensively, in spots we do, and we make a big play," Adams said. "But the inconsistency on defense is really hurting us.

"We felt coming into the season, our defense would be the strong point. We're starting so many young kids on offense and scoring this many points makes you feel real good. That's an outstanding coaching job by Don and Mike Taylor and receivers coach Dave Nemeth. But, we gotta stop winning games like this."

As long as they don't stop winning games all together, however, Adams won't complain too much. That's what keeps a season interesting.