



*Nottingham's Robert Wiggs scores on a 32-yard pass play from Mark Newlin. Wiggs had seven catches for 148 yards. (Photo courtesy of Wes Kirkpatrick)*

## **Newlin uses football to forget his problems**

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

**OCT. 24:** For Nottingham quarterback Mark Newlin, the fire that leveled his family's house Thursday did not distract him in today's game with West Windsor-Plainsboro South.

Just the opposite, in fact.

Playing football gave Newlin a few hours of relief from his unfortunate circumstances.

"Playing this game was more of a distraction to get away from what I was going through," the senior said. "I put that aside and played my game. I came out relaxed and did what I had to do.

"That didn't affect me at all today. Even though my house burned down, I felt I played a great game, but we just didn't pull through."

Newlin completed 15 of 31 passes for 244 yards, but one of his two interceptions was returned 101 yards for a touchdown as WWPS took a 39-13 win to snap Nottingham's three-game winning streak. The final score was a bit more one-sided than the actual game, as West Windsor scored twice on defense.

Unfortunately for the Northstars, they thought they had struck on defense first, but things didn't quite work out.

The Pirates held an 18-13 halftime lead as Newlin had scored on a one-yard run and also thrown a 32-yard touchdown pass to Robert Wiggs.

At the start of the third quarter, Andy Vital picked off a West Windsor pass and went 60 yards for a score. Thinking it had a 19-18 lead, Nottingham's celebration was short lived when the return was called back due to a clipping.

Two plays later, a completed pass was fumbled and WWPS returned it 55 yards for a touchdown and 19-18 had turned into 26-13. The Pirates continued to pile it on from there.

"That changed the momentum of the whole game," Adams said. "We blocked 20 yards behind the ball. Andy is almost in the endzone and we're blocking back here, we clipped him.

"That is stupid. That's the ballgame. And we can't get the momentum back."

With one last chance to make it a game, Nottingham had a second-and-goal from the six with the score 33-13 and over eight minutes left. But Ryan Brazel intercepted Newlin in the endzone and went a Colonial Valley Conference-record tying 101 yards to blow it open.

"It was a wobble route," Adams said. "He jumped the out route, it was a long throw, we should have hit the tight end coming on the drag. The A read and the B read were taken away, he should have hit the C.

"But, you know, he made a mistake. He tried to squeeze it into our best receiver, the kid jumped the route and ran it back for a touchdown. I don't think they did anything special, because we still were running our routes and they weren't covering us."

Nottingham's offense had been unstoppable in the previous three games, scoring 118 points. The Northstars moved the ball fairly well against the Pirates, but three turnovers will make a difference.

"Our mistakes beat us, their lack of mistakes helped them win the game," Jordan said. "I thought our kids came out hard. I was a little disappointed with our defense again at the beginning of the game, but I thought they made some nice adjustments and did some good things. We had some young guys step up this week."

The Northstars were not only dealing with Newlin's misfortune, but also with the death of teammate Sean Evert's brother.

"It was pretty tough," Newlin said of the past two days. "I just told the guys, stay together. We've been going through tough times this week, just keep fighting through it. That's what we came out here to do. We kept playing our game, we just didn't win out."

Newlin and his family are currently staying in a hotel and the quarterback says they are hanging in there.

"We're pulling through as a family, staying together through these tough times," he said. "We're just trying to look forward from here on out."

Adams admitted that the Northstars problems did not help matters, but refused to use them as an excuse.

"The quarterback's house burns down, we're not gonna make excuses, but c'mon," he said. "And with Sean Evert's brother dying, that wasn't a great situation either, mentally, for the kids.

"But, the bottom line – it was 19-13, we had a chance to win the game, we didn't make the play and we make a mistake and it costs us."

And while a loss is never good, at least it allowed the quarterback to forget about the real world for a while.