

Oct. 3, 2009 Hamilton Football

D'Angelo rock solid in Hornets win

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Oct. 3: West Windsor-Plainsboro South brought out the big guns in its attempt to thwart Hamilton West's football team today, even turning to a Steinert alumni for help.

Brian "Maynard" Welsh, a former Spartan who became the legendary "Voice of the Pirates" as the WWPS public address announcer, came out of retirement after halftime in an attempt to fire up the troops.

It worked for a while as the Pirates rallied from a 10-0 deficit to tie it.

But Jake D'Angelo, whose father Alan "Rock" D'Angelo actually played on the same Steinert soccer team as Welsh, made sure this day would belong to the Hornets.

D'Angelo scored his second touchdown of the game with 8:24 remaining and Hamilton hung on from there for a big 17-10 victory over WWPS.

If the Hornets are going to rebound from what was (for them) a sub-par .500 year, this was a key game. West Windsor had rallied from a three-touchdown deficit last year to post a huge win en route to an undefeated regular season and Hamilton still felt the sting of that one.

Last week, the sting of an overtime loss to Lawrence was even more fresh.

But Hamilton applied some ointment today in an impressive showing on both sides of the ball.

Led by Jamie Williams (18 rushes for 107 yards) and D'Angelo (10-50), the Hornets (2-1) churned out 216 rushing yards. D'Angelo also threw for 87 as Hamilton outgained the Pirates 303-147.

Defensively, linebackers Quincy Pickett-Stokes and Jordan Diaz were wreaking havoc in the West Windsor backfield.

"This was a big win, a team effort," Pickett-Stokes said. "Everybody came together, down to the sideline, down to our fans. They came together and overall, the coaching staff, they put us in the right positions in practice. All we had to do was come out to play."

"We gutted it out," coach Tom Hoglen said. "A lot of guys were tired and cramping on both sides. We thought it would be cool today with the rain, but the humidity came out and a lot of linemen up front today battled it out in the trenches."

"Jake D'Angelo came up with a big play to score and our defense kept us in the ballgame. Quincy did an outstanding job, everybody did."

Hamilton took a 3-0 lead on William Nelson's 22-yard field goal in the second quarter. Diaz's fumble recovery with three minutes left in the half set up Hamilton's first touchdown.

Starting at its 50, Hamilton moved to the 20 before D'Angelo found Michael Riehl with a pass down to the two. On first down, D'Angelo rolled right, looked to pass, then powered into the endzone.

"It was designed as a pass but South does a great job of blitzing and brought that whole right side of the line," the quarterback said. "They reversed the field, I just prayed to God I was gonna get in."

I turned around, saw my line on the right side was doing a perfect job of blocking, thought I might as well go for it. They did perfect blocking on that and I got in."

But déjà vu set in when West Windsor tied it early in the fourth quarter on a field goal.

This time, Hamilton did not let the Pirates complete their comeback as the Hornets took just two plays to score. Williams gained 32 yards on the first, and D'Angelo finished it off by going around left end and down the sideline to score.

Hamilton shut down the Pirates on their next series, then ran out the final four-plus minutes. A key play came when Williams picked up a first down by an inch on a third-down run.

"I'm just happy we found a way to win a big game," Hoglen said. "West Windsor South has done a lot of great things the last couple years, we've had some tough losses and it bounced our way this time."

"Third and inches down there, we got the measurement, thank God we got the first down. The ball went our way today, the kids hung tough when they tied it. We came up with a big play on the reverse and Jake hit the mid line option for us and kept it and ran it around the end for a touchdown and that was a huge play."

On what turned into a huge day for Hamilton.