

Babylon Football: PANTHERS POUND PORT JEFF, 42 ZIP

By Tony Spota

The Babylon Panthers blanked the Port Jefferson Royals 42-0 last Saturday afternoon at Port Jefferson. The Big Cats of Babylon's offensive line provided the blocking for the Panthers' relentless attack. With center Matt Pinto, guards Ryan Matthews and Joe Cosby and tackles Tyler Christiansen and Shea Amdur leading the way, the Panthers scored on five of their first six possessions. And besides that, they sandwiched in a defensive score.

Babylon's first touchdown drive began after a one-yard Royal punt which bounced back and fell dead at the Port Jeff 38-yard line. Quarterback Nick Santorelli gunned a right square-out to the magic hands of wideout Ray Wardell for 16. Santorelli and tailback Eric Schweitzer ate up the rest on the ground with Schweitzer capping it behind Matthews from the 1. Following another short punt, they went 40 yards on five plays. Again the keys were a pair of passes from Santorelli to Wardell, the latter a 22-yard fly down the right side with a big leap and catch in the end zone. Santorelli followed with a pitch to Schweitzer who raced right and hit Jake Carlock for a two-point conversion.

Three plays into the second quarter, with the ball on the Babylon 48, Royal back Doug Crawford began a sweep to his right and was nailed by Schweitzer who jarred the ball loose at the Port Jeff 48. Linebacker Luke Zappia grabbed it, skipped through a tangle of linemen, broke right and raced untouched to pay dirt. Zappia's return went 52 yards. Santorelli added the first of his four extra-point kicks.

The Panthers weren't finished yet. A diving interception by Schweitzer gave them the ball at the Port 34. Two plays later from the 30, Santorelli gunned a left flag to Carlock for the TD. On the next Royals possession, Zappia chased Crawford all over tarnation, nailing the back at the Port 16 for a 23-yard loss. But a late hit placed the ball at the 31. Three plays later, the Royals punted to the Babylon 31 where Schweitzer gathered it in and weaved 69 yards for an apparent score. But the play was called back for an illegal block and Babylon took over at their own 28. Santorelli then led them 72 yards on nine plays with Schweitzer sweeping the right side for the last 25 and a TD.

The Panthers carried a 35-0 lead into the second half. They zapped the first Royal effort when Carlock picked off a pass at the Port 38 and hauled it to the 26. Quarterback Henry Brunjes was now at the helm. He carried for three plays, the last an 11-yard burst up the gut for the score.

The Royals were able to move the ball into Panther turf on two later thrusts. One was stopped when quarterback Tyler D'Accordo drifted to his left on an apparent pass option and was chased further into the arms of John Visgauss who burst into the backfield for the sack. The Black D controlled the final period.

The Smurfs came up strong throughout the second half on both sides of the ball. These are the guys who pay their dues in all those practices going against the top cats. They come into each game with valor and wait their turns to get into the fray. And when they get in, they match up to the other teams and carry the Babylon tradition with honor. The Smurfs are that important ingredient necessary for the program's continued success.

The victory was the ninetieth for Coach Rick Punzone who now has a 90-19 record for an incredible .826 percentage.

Other stuff – For Babylon, Santorelli completed 9 of 10 passes for 124 yards and two TDs. He added 25 yards rushing for a total 149 all-purpose yards. Eric Schweitzer had 9 carries for 62 yards and two TDs. He added 24 yards in returns. His brother Steve added another 18 yards on three carries. Twin towers Wardell and Carlock combined for eight receptions, 127 yards and two TDs. The Black D held the Royals to three yards passing on one completion and 156 rushing on 45 carries for a net 159 yards from scrimmage. For Port Jeff – Paul Cavanaugh had 89 yards on 16 carries. Students Rachel Geiser and Jessie Gray gave a beautiful performance singing our National Anthem before game time.

Next up – the Panthers (3-0) ride out to meet the Baymen of Hampton Bays (1-2), tomorrow (Friday) night. Game time is listed at 7 pm. The two met a year ago with the Panthers winning 37-8. The Baymen will be seeking to avenge that one.