

Babylon Football:

HAPPY HOMECOMING!

PLAYOFF BOUND PANTHERS RIP MUSTANGS, 42-7

By Tony Spota

It was a festive afternoon last Saturday at Williams field. Homecoming brought the alumni from afar. The Pep Band was up, the cheerleaders were super throughout the day, various chowders from all sources were at the stand. Five Babylon Greats from years ago were introduced and given honorary seats next to the Babylon bench – Mitty Beyers (Class of 1937), Steve Ferraro ('41), Lou Wenger ('41), Gerard Brown ('43) and Joe DeLuca ('47). Each of the Babylon High classes entered a float. The winning float, Angry Birds, went to the Junior Class. Babylon Mayor Ralph Scordino was named an honorary captain and accompanied the Panthers at the initial coin toss.

In the Homecoming Court, the royalty had Danny Lum, Logan Middleton, Nick Santorelli, Matt Taggart, Ray Wardell and Luke Zappia vying for the King honors. Alana Abbott, Roseanne Bencivenga, Jayne Dittmeier, Giovanna Domingo, Shelby Fredericks and Kaileen Hart, all beauties, were up for the Queen slot. All very deserving. Logan and Jayne were the selections for the top thrones as 1913's Homecoming King and Queen.

The game itself turned into a blowout. The Mount Sinai Mustangs came onto the scene attempting to unseat the Babylon Panthers for the top slot in Division IV. Babylon's Eric Schweitzer took the opening kickoff at the Panther 19-yard line and following a number of fine blocks, zipped it 74 yards to the Mustang 7. Three plays later, left tackle Tyler Christiansen walled off the defense and Santorelli raced it in untouched from the 2.

It looked like it might be a tight struggle when Mount got the ball. Following a shared sack by Shea Amdur and Jack Kresek, they were third and long at their own 43. Zach Wolfe swept the right side and went the distance for an apparent response. But the play was called back, a crushing blow to the Mustang hopes. They were never really in the game after that. Babylon's next possession began at their own 15. Santorelli dove for a yard, gunned a left buttonhook to Jake Carlock for 12 and shoveled a quickie to Zappia for two more. Then he fired off a left fly to Carlock who gathered it in and went all . . . the . . . way, 70 yards for the touchdown.

In the second quarter, the Panthers scored twice again. They went 57 yards on seven plays with Santorelli hitting Carlock for 17 and Schweitzer taking the next five carries for the score, capping it from the 1, following Shawn Tripp over the left side into the end zone. Their next drive went 65 yards on seven plays, all in the air. Santorelli deftly hit Carlock for 10, Schweitzer for 30, Carlock again for 17 and capped it with a gun to A. J. Giuliano at the goal line from the 8, a picture play for the TD. The Mustangs responded with their only scoring drive as quarterback Coles Williams took them to the Babylon 6 with successive passes to Chris Farrel and Nick Kelly. With nine ticks remaining on the clock, Williams then hit Brandon Drumgole under the goal post for the payoff. Joe Casper kicked the extra point to end the half. It was the first time this season that anyone scored on the Panthers in the second quarter.

With an open offense behind an excellent line, the Panthers have outscored their opponents 182-21 during the first half in all games this year. Their first half production includes 30 possessions and 26 TDs – 22 by the offense and 4 by the D and special teams.

The second half was entirely Babylon's. An interception by Carlock and a pair of major penalties put the ball on the Mustang 33. The Panthers stayed on the ground to the 13. Then Santorelli hit an open Schweitzer on the left side and the speedy tailback took it in for the score. It was Santorelli's fifteenth TD pass of the year, a new Babylon record, surpassing the mark set by Brett Tiedemann (14 in 2003). A minute and a half later, Carlock thwarted the Mustangs with his second pick of the day and his sixth of the season. This time, he went all the way, 67 yards to pay dirt. The Smurfs took it from there with Henry Brunjes at the helm. They smartly ate up the remainder of the third quarter and the entire fourth with a solid ground game. In all, the Panthers used eleven backs for 33 carries.

The final was 42-7 and the Panthers proved themselves to be the top team in the division. They have the longest winning streak on the Island with eighteen consecutive victories, which also extends the BHS school record. They have also made the playoffs for the eighteenth consecutive season. Coach Rick Punzone was very satisfied with the result, "That opening kickoff play set the tone. The line did the job we asked of them on both sides of the ball. That was a very good performance against a good Mount Sinai team. I look forward to our next two games and hope they will come up strong again."

Other stuff – Babylon had been prone to penalties all year. They went penalty-free this time. Santorelli was 9 of 12 passing for 179 yards and three TDs on his way to a school passing record. He scored on a run, was 6 for 6 on extra-point kicks and had a kickoff into the end zone, his eighth of the year. Carlock caught five passes for 126 yards and a TD and carried for 15 more. He returned two picks for a total 100 yards, the former leading to a TD and the latter for his own TD. Carlock had topped all defenders on the Island with nine interceptions last year. Schweitzer ran for 34 yards, caught for 43 and had a 74-yard return for a total 151 all-purpose yards and two TDs. For Mount Sinai – Williams completed five passes for 80 yards and a TD. Kelly caught three for 56 yards. The team used eight backs to rush for 155 yards.

Next up – The Panthers host the Mercy Monarchs Friday, tomorrow evening, at Williams Field. Game time is scheduled for 6 pm. Babylon is 6-0 and Mercy 0-6. The Monarchs will be looking for a win to get off the schneid. The Panthers will seek to wrap up the top slot in the division.