

**Babylon Football:
PANTHERS NIP KNIGHTS, 17-14**

by Tony Spota

It was a chess match. A classic meeting of two masters, Babylon head coach Rick Punzone and Glenn head coach Dave Shanahan. Over the years since Punzone took the Panther helm in 2003, the two had faced off thirteen times counting postseason play. Punzone had won the first six and since 2009, Shanahan had won five in a row. But Punzone won this time in a squeaker and he now leads 8 games to 6 in the ongoing battle of the Division IV masters.

The game was played last Friday evening at Elwood. The scoring went back and forth with both team attacking from a spread formation. Babylon drew first blood in the opening quarter going 57 yards on seven plays. The keys were a 20-yard dash by Eric Schweitzer and a 14-yarder by Nick Santorelli, both off left tackle. It was capped when Santorelli hit Ray Wardell on a short right post from the 11 yard line for the touchdown. Alex Malhas kicked the first of his two extra points.

Glenn responded late in the second quarter going 80 yards on eleven plays, all by Matt Shanerman. He rushed nine times, taking the Knights to the Babylon 6. Then on a dropped snap, he was sacked by Babylon's Kevin Smith. But on the next play from the 14, he gunned over the middle on a right square in, hitting Mike Tufano for the TD with 54 seconds remaining in the half. Dave Wicks tied it with the first of his two extra-point kicks.

Both defenses came up in the third quarter. An interception by Alec Zamet stopped one of the Glenn drives. Later, the Panthers went 46 yards on five plays, the key a 28 yard left fly from Santorelli to Jake Carlock, taking them to the Glenn 8. Brian LosKamp blasted up the gut from the 3 for the score. The Knights' threatened a response, but Carlock leaped for an interception on a deep right fly at the Babylon 10.

The Knights tied it midway in the final quarter going 78 yards on five plays. Shanerman found Steve Orkiszewski on a right post and the fleet receiver took it to the house, 56 yards for the TD. Glenn's next possession began at the Babylon 26, but was thwarted when Smith chased down Shanerman who raced right and was met by John Dertinger before going out of bounds.

Two plays later Babylon took over on its own 24. A shovel pass to Carlock went for 26 yards, but Carlock attempted a leap over a defender and was stopped at midfield. The referees huddled for a while and enforced a new rule, charging the receiver with a dangerous play, bring the ball back to the Babylon 30. But not to worry. Two plays later, Santorelli followed a host of blocks over the right side for a 36-yard gain to the Glenn 36. Four plays later, it was fourth and three from the 11 and Malhas came in to drill the gamer, a 28-yard field goal with 57 ticks remaining. Glenn's attempted comeback ended on the Babylon 35 and the clock ran out on the Knights. Great game. Babylon 17, Glenn 14.

Other stuff – For Babylon – Santorelli was 11 for 21 passing, good for 130 yards and a TD. He carried 21 times for 137 yards, making 267 total all-purpose yards. Schweitzer had 8 carries for 49 yards, caught 7 passes for 39 and had two returns for 25, a total 113 all purpose. Carlock caught 3 for 80 and returned one for 27, a 107 total, plus a key pick. Babylon's line performed beautifully on both sides of the ball. Last year's blocking fullback, Jeann Cruz was moved into a tackle spot and returned from injury to play both ways in this one.

Other stuff – For Glenn - Glenn's Marching Knights and Color Guard gave a super halftime performance. The Knights' front line had a great game on offense, Matt Choinski, Brendan McDonough, Anthony Pino, Griffin Ryan and Bryan Smith. Edwin Rubio and Ed You did a fine job on defense, as well. Shanerman was 8 of 17 passing for 159 yards and two TDs. He carried 23 times for a net 86 yards and had a total 245 all purpose. Orkiszewski caught five for 95 yards and a TD.

Punzone added after the game, "It's always a great game between two excellent programs. We're surely glad to take this one."

Next up: Tomorrow evening, Friday, September 21, 6 pm at Williams Field, the Panthers host the Greenport Porters.