

Babylon Football:

PANTHERS BLAST BONICKERS 49-7

By Tony Spota

The Babylon Panthers finished their regular season undefeated atop Suffolk's Division IV as they beat the East Hampton Bonackers 49-7 at East Hampton last Saturday afternoon. The fall colors composed a brilliant scene on the long drive out east. The renaissance painters would've loved it.

The Babylon Panthers performed a masterpiece of their own on the gridiron in a practically perfect display of football. Babylon's relentless attack began early. Their first possession went 55 yards on two plays. Quarterback Nick Santorelli took to the air, hitting Jake Carlock twice, a left square-in for 10 and then a right fly for 45 and a touchdown. The two then combined for the two-point conversion. Santorelli's pass was lofted into the end zone just to the right of the goalpost. They went 54 yards on their next drive. Again, Santorelli fired a bomb down the right side, this time hitting Luke Zappia for 35 yards and a TD. Santorelli added the first of his five extra-point kicks.

The Panthers tallied four TDs in the second quarter. Babylon went 73 yards on four plays with Santorelli tossing a right flair to Eric Schweitzer for 13, Schweitzer racing through right guard for 19, Santorelli hitting Carlock on a left slant for 36 and Schweitzer capping it off left tackle from the 5, following a block by Tyler Christiansen. Then they went 52 yards on four plays. Schweitzer took a pitch and raced around the left side, following a block by A. J. Giuliano, for the TD. The run went 35 yards. Next, Schweitzer picked off a pass at the Babylon 14 and went the distance behind a host of Panther blockers, 86 yards to pay dirt. Babylon added a loud exclamation point before the half as Zappia blasted through the left side and outran the secondary, 40 yards for the score.

The Panthers scored five times on five possessions and added a defensive TD during the initial two periods. Their first half production this year is now 40 possessions with 36 touchdowns – 30 by the offense and 6 by the defense and special teams. The Panthers are a scoring machine.

And they weren't finished. The Smurfs, who had entered early in the second quarter, added another score. With Henry Brunjes at the helm, they took their first drive 57 yards on eleven plays, all on the ground. Brunjes capped it through right guard from the 3. The Bonackers got on the board late in the fourth quarter with quarterback Cortland Heneveld, tailback Thomas Nelson and wingback Brendan Hughes carrying most of the load. The drive went 84 yards on eleven plays. It was capped when Heneveld faked an inside handoff and raced around the right side from the 4. Lucas Escobar kicked the extra point.

The Black D (actually they wore their visiting whites) had a number of key plays besides Schweitzer's long pick-6. The D chalked up three sacks - one each by Schweitzer and Rich Wilson and another shared by Christiansen and Jon Bell. They also had two fumble recoveries – by John Visgauss and Tazon Rogers.

Other stuff – The Panthers have run their winning streak to 20, the longest current string in Long Island. They've scored 342 points this season to lead all Long Island teams. The win was number 95 for Coach Rick Punzone. Babylon's total passing yardage this season has reached 1153, tying the school's season record set last year. Santorelli was 6 of 7 for 155 yards and two

TDs. Carlock's three receptions for 91 yards give him a current total 33 catches and 606 yards, surpassing the school's individual receiver season records (31 and 598) set by Carlock last year. Schweitzer carried six times for 71 yards and two TDs. He caught two passes for 29 yards and added 20 yards in kick returns for a total 120 all-purpose yards. With the sack and the interception return, he had quite a field day. Zappia touched the ball twice and scored both times – a 40 yard run and a 35 yard pass reception.

For East Hampton, Heneveld had 19 carries for 75 yards and a TD and passed for 20, giving him 95 all-purpose. Nelson rushed for 65 yards on eleven carries and caught a pass for 9 yards. He had 15 on a kick return for 89 all-purpose. Hughes carried four times for 40 yards and had 95 yards in kick returns for 135 all-purpose. The senior players were individually recognized before their last home game.

Up next – The playoffs. Within divisions, the eight seeds are determined by power points, a combination of winning record and strength of schedule. In Division IV, (1) Babylon 8-0 will host (8) East Hampton 3-5, tomorrow (Friday) evening at Williams Field. Game time is scheduled for 6 pm. This is a repeat of last year's playoff opener, won by the Panthers 55-14.

Other scheduled Division IV games will be (7) Greenport 6-2 at (2) Mount Sinai 6-2, (6) Bayport 5-3 at (3) Glenn 6-2 and (5) Center Moriches 6-2 at (4) Shoreham 6-2.

Among our neighbors in Division II, West Islip 5-3 will host Newfield 5-3 and North Babylon 4-4 will be at Smithtown West 7-1.