

Babylon Football:

PANTHERS TAKE PLAYOFF OPENER, CRUSH BONACKERS 53-8

By Tony Spota

The Babylon Panthers continued at their rapid pace and handily won their Division IV quarterfinal last Friday evening at Williams Field. Despite a biting chill, the Babylon faithful turned up, the pep band was there to carry the musical side of it and the cheerleaders, always there, performed their mounts and led the crowd.

The Panthers grabbed the game early, scoring at will with 33 points in the first quarter. On the very first play from scrimmage, Eric Schweitzer crashed into the Bonacker backfield, stripped the ball and raced sixteen yards into the end zone for a touchdown. Moments later, Babylon went 60 yards on five plays for their second score. They gobbled up 31 yards on runs by Schweitzer, Nick Santorelli and Luke Zappia. Then on first down at the East 29, Santorelli hit Ray Wardell on a right look-in for fourteen yards. The play broke two school records as the team surpassed its season passing yardage record and Santorelli surpassed his own season yardage mark, both established in 2012. A penalty moved the ball to the 10-yard line and Santorelli tossed a left flair to Schweitzer, who zipped in for the score.

The ensuing kickoff resulted in a turnover at the Bonacker 20 as a host of Panthers loosened the ball and Jack Kresek recovered it. Babylon didn't dally. Zappia blasted off left tackle, then broke to the middle and romped in for the TD. Babylon was up by three scores in four minutes and three seconds. And they continued the onslaught. Schweitzer broke off right tackle, sped to the side line and followed Wardell for pay dirt. The run went 31 yards. On their next possession, Santorelli gunned a bomb to Jake Carlock down the right side, 49 yards for the score. The Panthers led 33-0 at the quarter.

The Smurfs took it from there. Quarterback Henry Brunjes led a 71-yard drive on twelve plays. Shawn Tripp carried eight times for 38 yards and capped it up the gut from the 1. And the Panthers were up 40-0 at the half. Babylon's strong early production continues. This season, they've had 46 first half possessions and scored 42 TDs, 35 by the offense and 7 by the defense and special teams.

They wasted no time in the second half. Carlock took the opening kickoff at the Babylon 24. He shaked and baked, broke left, then deked his way to the middle, broke left again, another deke, slanted right and raced to the far right corner for the TD. The Panthers showed lots of teamwork on the play with plenty of excellent downfield blocks. On that long meander, Carlock was never touched. Babylon's next turn went 35 yards on two plays. Joe Cappello dove for 1 and Steve (the other) Schweitzer blasted through right guard and fought his way, 34 yards for the TD.

East Hampton got on the board on the first play of the last quarter. Quarterback Cortland Heneveld broke off right tackle and ran 62 yards for the TD. Heneveld ran it in for the two-point conversion.

The Panthers held the lead from then on. Carlock's 58-yard punt set the Bonackers back to their own 3. Their drive took them to the 45 before the moving clock ended the game. The final, 53-8. The 45 point difference set another Babylon record for margin of

victory in a playoff game. The previous record was 41 against Mercy in 2008 and East Hampton in 2012.

Other stuff – Babylon has now won 21 straight, currently the longest streak on the Island. The Panthers have scored 395 points, the most among all teams in the area. The D has limited the opposition to 78 points, the fewest in Suffolk County. In this game, Babylon brought a number of star players up from the JV to experience the varsity playoff aura. Zach Amelia, Brian Boehm, Chris Costanzo, K'Sean Reid, Kenny Rohl, Scott Sasso and Matt Visgauss made their varsity debuts. Matt had been suited up with the varsity for most of the season. The Schweitzer brothers combined for six carries, 86 yards and two TDs rushing. In addition, Eric had one catch for ten yards and a TD and scored on a strip and recovery. Carlock scored twice. He caught a pass for 49 yards and ran back a kickoff for 76 for a total 125 all-purpose yards. Santorelli was 3 for 3 passing for 73 yards and two TDs. He added five extra-point kicks. Zappia had four carries for 48 yards and a TD. He had a pair of sacks and John Visgauss had one. Tripp had 8 carries for 38 yards and a TD. Babylon's defensive front was overwhelming. They rushed in to stifle the run often at the handoff point and allowed no passing completions. For East Hampton, Heneveld had 14 carries for 92 yards and a TD.

Up next – The Panthers (9-0) will host their Division semifinal game tomorrow (Friday evening) at Williams Field. They'll play the Shoreham Wildcats (7-2) who beat Center Moriches 56-29 as tailback Tyler Anderson ran for 426 yards. He had five TDs, four rushing. In their regular season game on September 20, the Panthers won 36-14 and were able to limit the super back to 146 yards, one play an exciting 80 yard run for a TD. The battle of the high scoring cats will be a good one. Game time is scheduled for 6 pm.

In the other Division IV quarterfinals, Glenn blanked Bayport 30-0 and it was Mount Sinai over Greenport 20-14. The two winners will play their semifinal tomorrow at Mount Sinai. Both are 7-2.

Our neighboring teams in the Division II quarterfinals were unable to advance. West Islip was edged by Newfield, 18-14 and North Babylon fell to Smithtown West 57-46 in a slugfest.