

Dover dominates Phila 14-0



(Photo by Jim Celuch)

FRED TODD IS UPENDED BY JAY TOLLOTI AS AL LEDRICH (42) CLOSES IN
The Dover fullback led all runners while Ledrich was a defensive standout

By REA TAICLET
Sports Editor

Bob Maltarich was sitting with his feet propped up on well-worn wooden desk in a corner of the cramped coaching quarters in the bowels of Crater Stadium about an

hour before game time Friday night.

"I wish it was 8 o'clock," he sighed, looking at an imaginary watch on his wrist. "This is the longest week I've ever spent...it seemed like a month...dragging on forever. This is the worst part...the waiting."

As it turned out, the wait was worth it for the second-year coach. His Dover Tornadoes manhandled New Philadelphia 14-0, ending regular-season play with a 9-1 record, including 6-0 in the Cardinal Conference, and a third straight league crown.

The win also put them in line for a state playoff spot if Steubenville Big Red can manage to lose tonight.

AS THE VICTORIOUS Tornadoes milled quietly around their dressing room, Maltarich talked about the climax to a season that produced five shutouts among nine consecutive wins.

"We've come a long way from Steubenville," he said in a brief flashback to the season's opening loss. "We had our chance at Steubenville and didn't make it, but that's football. (Dover lost 7-6 when a two-point conversion attempt failed in the second quarter against Big Red).

"But, we kept improving and learning. I've never had a more attentive group of players. This may be the best season I've ever been associated with as a coach...everything just fell into place."

It is that same Steubenville club that can keep Dover from its second straight appearance in the Division II playoffs next weekend. Big Red is to play Steubenville Catholic tonight and a win or a tie virtually locks up a state quarterfinals berth against Region 7 frontrunner Youngstown Cardinal Mooney.

FRIDAY NIGHT'S game had been forecast by many to be less than thrilling because of the team records. But there were a few surprises, at the beginning, the middle and at the end.

At the beginning, a barrage of fireworks heralded Dover's entrance onto the Crater Stadium turf, while the visiting Quakers kept the crowd on edge, waiting until time had expired on the pre-game clock before coming out of the locker room.

The middle surprise pleased marching band fans. The halftime shows lasted five minutes longer than usual.

And the end-of-the-game surprise came with two minutes remaining, when two banks of lights on the north side of the stadium blinked off, leaving the arch-rivals to play out the duration in semi-darkness.

The action itself had its moments, too. Twice in the first half, Dover was inside the New Philadelphia 10-yardline on fourth-and-short yardage situations. Twice Maltarich chose to try and convert them to first downs rather than attempt field goals.

The Quaker defense held both times and Dover trudged into the halftime break clinging to a tentative 7-0 lead instead of what might have been a more comfortable 13-0 cushion.

"I didn't want to come away from either one with just three points," Maltarich said of his decision. "I figured even if we didn't make it to the end zone, we'd have them deep in a hole and we'd force them to punt, giving us good field position again, anyway."

"Maybe we tried to get too much too soon. We messed up some blocking schemes down in there, but I have a lot of faith in our defense."

That faith paid big dividends as Dover repeatedly stuffed everything New Philadelphia tried to do, resulting in minus-16 yards rushing, only 19 yards passing and only one first down which came late in the fourth quarter.

"WE WERE controlling the line of scrimmage both ways. I knew the defense would hold and when we were on offense, it would be just a matter of time until Phila cracked," Maltarich said.

One thing the Quakers did that no other opponent had been able to do was to stop Dover's inside running game, especially the up-the-middle trap with fullback Fred Todd carrying the payload.

"One of our weaknesses all year has been running to the outside," Maltarich explained, "so we had to establish the middle before going wide. Tonight, though, they jammed the middle, but we got the yardage off-tackle and out on the ends."

Todd, Chris Hutras and Butch Braglin each caught a pass that was nullified by penalties. As a result, the receiving column carried only one name — junior wide receiver Mickey Mamarella, who hauled in all of



(Photo by Eric Albrecht)

MICKEY MAMARELLA MAKES DIVING CATCH
Bret Shetler got caught behind the game's MVP

From A-1 . . .

Coaches rehash what might have been and what wasn't in game

quarterback Mike Bayer's seven completions, a performance that was to earn him the Most Valuable Player trophy.

WHILE IT WAS unusual that one receiver should catch every pass that counted, it was of no real surprise to Maltarich.

"Mamarella and Hutras could be considered our primary targets. I guess, but we run them in combination. Bayer reacts to what the defensive secondary is doing and tonight they were covering Hutras closer, so he went to Mamarella."

The approach worked just right as Bayer threw for 99 yards, including a 12-yarder to the New Philadelphia 8-yardline that set up the second-quarter score, and strikes of 15 and 12 yards during the last TD march in the third period.

The aerial show also included a tossback to Mamarella, who faked a run and then straightened to loft a picture-perfect toss to Hutras in the end zone, but it was called back because of a penalty.

"We had that play and the reverse-pitch (which Mamarella ran in from three yards out for the second touchdown) in our game plan all season. We used the reverse-pitch in an earlier game, but it was the first time for the pitch-and-pass," Maltarich revealed.

THE DOVER coach and his crosstown counterpart, New Philadelphia's Jim Roman, spoke in less-than-glowing terms about the officiating.

Maltarich felt the Mamarella-to-Hutras surprise and another bomb to Todd should have been good, but both were called back for having ineligible receivers downfield.

"It's something that hasn't been called on us all year. You'd think that if we were getting linemen downfield, somebody would have called it, but nobody ever did," Maltarich said.

The burly field boss, who accepts wins and losses with equal aplomb — at least publicly — concluded his remarks by complimenting the Quakers.

"We knew we were in a game, that's for sure. They played us as

tough as anybody has all year. I think everybody can walk away from this one with their heads held high. Jim Roman did a terrific job preparing for us."

ROMAN, WHO has salvaged only one victory and one tie in seven tries against Dover, was a little less-enthusiastic, but still talkative.

"I'm not going to comment on the officiating for print," he said after making some off-the-record remarks.

But he was quick to add that Dover won the game legitimately.

"There were things we wanted to do and couldn't," the bulky blond said. "Steve Stokey had one day of preparation at quarterback after Rick Leggett hurt his arm while throwing a pass in practice."

"It took away our option and our passing strategy. We had receivers open at times, but we just couldn't get the ball to them. You can't fault Stokey. With no time to get ready and with the weather and field the way they were, he was in there in the worst possible conditions."

Leggett still played at running back and defensive back, and along with linebacker Alvin Ledrich, was credited by defensive coordinator Al Kennedy with effectively shutting down one of Dover's bread-and-butter running plays, the inside trap to Todd.

"We keyed our linebackers on Freddie and we did a lot of moving around out there to try and confuse their blocking schemes," Kennedy pointed out. "I thought Leggett and Ledrich played probably their best defensive games of the season."

TO HIS CREDIT, Roman kept the loss in perspective.

"It's been a frustrating year for us," he shrugged. "We had a lot of key injuries. We also had a lot of very nice kids doing their best despite being very inexperienced."

"We just weren't too sure of some things out there tonight. We made a lot of mistakes and you can't do that against that kind of team."

"Dover was just too big and strong for us to handle."