

Princeton starts fast, sustains, wins

By **BOBBY LOESCH**

For The Trentonian

PRINCETON — Start fast, then sustain. That's the mantra that wrote the story of Princeton's 21-12 victory over Hopewell Valley on a windy and cloudy Saturday afternoon at Princeton high school.

While the Little Tigers' (5-1) offense played consistently well throughout the game, head coach Steve Everette thought the key was the first seven points — which came on a Josh Gordon rushing touchdown.

"We made it a point of emphasis to get off to a better start today," Everette said.

Gordon, who finished with a team-high 105 yards on the ground, echoed his coach's sentiment.

"We never usually come out and score in the first quarter," said the senior running back, whose touchdown gave Princeton a lead it never relinquished. "We showed them something new, they got flustered, and that opened it up for our offense."

Hopewell (2-4) played a feisty game until the final whistle. The Bulldogs could have tied the game in the second quarter following a Tim Sutton 3-yard touchdown run, but the two-point conversion run failed.

Following its touchdown, Hopewell took a gamble and recovered an onside kick, but a controversial illegal equipment penalty gave the ball back to Princeton.

The Little Tigers capitalized on the call. Quarterback Mike

Olentine connected with Doug Bryant for a 14-yard touchdown pass to finish a seven-play drive and give the Little Tigers a 14-6 lead.

In the second half, Princeton got contributions from both running backs. Senior Trevor Barsamian punched in a 1-yard touchdown to give the Little Tigers a 21-6 lead one play after an 82-yard sideline run by Gordon put Princeton on the goal line.

"They were trying to cut off the outside," said Gordon. "So coach said press the middle, then go outside."

Hopewell threatened the deficit when quarterback Drew Semple rushed for a 3-yard touchdown less than a minute left in the game, but a missed extra point put the game too

far out of reach.

Though Princeton got seven less first downs and 48 less yards on the ground, the running game was the main component of the victory.

"My offensive line did a great job," said Everette, when asked to name the game's MVP.

Now sitting at 5-1, Princeton has its eye on the playoffs but isn't losing focus on the regular season schedule.

"We're trying to hold our position in the playoffs," Everette said before pausing then adding, "— and *get* to the playoffs."

**PRINCETON 21,
HOPEWELL 12**

Hopewell (2-4)	0	6	0	6	—12
Princeton (5-1)	7	7	0	7	—21

P- Gordon 2 run (Vieten kick)
H- Sutton 3 run (run failed)
P- Bryant 14 pass from Olentine (Vieten kick)
P- Barsamian 1 run (Vieten kick)
H- Semple 3 run (kick failed)

	H	P
First Downs	19	12
Rushing	55-215	24-167
Passing	4-11-2	11-17-1
Pass Yards	60	142
Sacks by/Yards	0-0	1-6
Fumbles/Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties/Yards	5-40	11-99
Punts/Avg.	1-58	2-26

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS HOPEWELL

RUSHING: Drew Semple 23-71 TD; Tim Sutton 1-3 TD; Brian Fisher 12-46; Matt Pagano 2-14; Sam Roskos 7-22; Jeff Castagne 10-59.

PASSING: Castagne 0-1-1; Konrad 0-1-0; Semple 4-9-1, 60 yards.

RECEIVING: Castagne 3-45; Mike Ryan 1-15.

SACKS: None.

INTERCEPTIONS: Adam Hite 1-35.

PRINCETON

RUSHING: Mike Olentine 4-22; Trevor Barsamian 8-40 TD; Josh Gordon 12-105 TD

PASSING: Olentine 11-17-1, 142 Yards TD.

RECEIVING: Doug Bryant 5-75 TD; Nick Miranda 1-17; Luke Cordonnier 1-10; Gordon 2-14; Skye Ettin 1-22; Eric Shorter 1-4.

SACKS: N/A 1-6.

INTERCEPTIONS: Ettin 2-15.