

Fueled by Olentine's Pinpoint Passing, PHS Football Rolls Past WW/P-N 41-20

In the first two games this season, Princeton High senior quarterback Michael Olentine was just a little off target.

The 5'11, 160-pound Olentine had hit 12-of-31 passes for 184 yards and three interceptions as the Little Tigers got out of the gate with narrow wins over Nottingham and Ewing.

As PHS prepared for its showdown last Saturday against fellow unbeaten WW/P-N (2-0), Olentine put in some extra time on the passing game.

"We did spend a lot of time passing this week and I settled down," said Olentine.

"The first two weeks I think I was a little anxious and threw the ball too fast. I really tried to focus hard in practice on getting the ball where it needed to be."

It didn't take long for Olentine's diligence to pay major dividends last Saturday.

With PHS trailing a third-up WW/P-N squad 7-0 in the first quarter, Olentine hit classmate Doug Bryant with a 29-yard pass to get the Little Tigers deep in Northern Knight territory. PHS cashed in with a touchdown run by Trevor Barsamian.

In the second quarter, Olentine uncocked a beau-

tiful spiral as he hit Nick Miranda for a 19-yard scoring strike to give PHS a 13-7 lead.

Using his legs minutes later, Olentine scored on a quarterback sneak as PHS took a 20-7 lead into halftime.

Things got a little dicey in the third quarter as WW/P-N narrowed the gap to 26-20.

But connecting with Bryant for a 30-yard pass play, Olentine led the Little Tigers on a critical scoring march. Ending the drive with another sneak for a touchdown, Olentine helped PHS go ahead 34-20.

The Little Tigers never looked back on the way to a 41-20 triumph as they improved to 3-0 for first time since 1991.

In Olentine's view, the offense was sharp all-around as it scored the most points in a game for the program since PHS's 48-24 win over Ewing in 2006.

"Our offensive line did a great job with pass protection and running the counter with Josh [Gordon] was unbelievable," said Olentine.

"We had great execution and that showed throughout the game. They started off great but throughout the game we ended up playing well."

Olentine enjoys playing with receivers Miranda and Bryant. "Both of the those guys run flawless routes and both of those guys have great hands," said Olentine, who finished the game 10-of-17 for 144 yards and two touchdowns with Bryant making four catches for 105 yards and Miranda getting three receptions for 38 yards. "I am always comfortable going to either one of them."

PHS head coach Steve Everette is comfortable having Olentine running his offense.

"Michael is an experienced guy," said Everette. "Last year, he spent a lot of time going in and out and he got the chance to learn. This year coming in, he was already ready to go. He knows the throws he can make. He knows his strength; he knows his receivers' strengths. We just try to put him in good position to make plays."

The Little Tigers got some big plays from its running game as Gordon raced for 155 yards on 32 carries while Barsamian rumbled for 81 yards in 10 attempts.

"Trevor is a little banged up and we wanted to try to limit his carries a little bit so we just relied on Josh a little bit more than normal," said Everette.

PHS was able to rely on its

defense to thwart WW/P-N as it slowed down the Northern Knights when it counted most.

"The guys were swarming," said Everette. "We were able to get Tom Borchert back from an injury and that definitely helped us. He was awfully excited about playing this week. Our three linebackers are pretty good, they run to the football and make all kinds of plays. They kind of stabilize our defense."

In producing its sizzling start, PHS has been stabilized by its large corps of seniors.

"Those kids that have worked hard the last four years and worked hard this summer," said Everette, reflecting on his group of seniors.

"They are saying it is our time to go and do the things that we have been coached to do."

Everette is ready for his next coaching task as he looks to get his team fired up for its clash against winless but dangerous Trenton Central.

"Anyone who thinks Trenton is a trap game is a fool; there is a whole bunch of good athletes over there," maintained Everette.

"They are going to be tough. They are going to be flying around and they are going to be physical. We are not going to be overlooking Trenton."

PHS knows it can't slip up as it looks to make the fall one to remember. "Our ultimate goal is getting there when the weather gets a lot colder," added Everette.

"The CVC will make you battle tested. This is another test and we did a pretty good job of getting through and next week is another test. We are going to prepare ourselves."

Olentine, for his part, is confident that the Little Tig-

gers won't lose their focus.

"In the first two games, we played well," said Olentine. "We did enough to win but this is definitely a good team that we beat today and we beat them decisively. We know we are a good team but we still have room to improve."

If Olentine keeps improving, PHS could end up with a lot of decisive wins this fall.

—Bill Alden



ON TARGET: Princeton High senior quarterback Michael Olentine prepares to unload a pass last Saturday in PHS's 41-20 win over WW/P-N. Olentine produced his sharpest passing effort of the season in the victory, hitting 10-of-17 passes for 144 yards and two touchdowns. The victory improved PHS to 3-0 for the first time since 1991. The Little Tigers will look to keep rolling on October 3 when they play at Trenton Central.

(Photo by Stephen Goldsmith)

Tats are served in a collection of vintage china teacups and saucers with a classical offering of teas of the finest quality and an array of delectable tea sandwiches.

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