

## With Barsamian Producing Big Senior Day Effort PHS Football Tops WW/P-S, Grds for Playoffs

Trevor Barsamian spent much of last week limping around, not looking like a running back ready to carry the load for the Princeton High football team.

Recovering from a gimpy ankle and dealing with a painful calf, much of Barsamian's preparation for the November 7 clash with visiting WW/P-S centered on ice baths and stretching.

But when Barsamian woke up on Saturday with Senior Day festivities hours away, he knew that he would be in action.

"I had to play," said the 5'11, 250-pound Barsamian. "It is Senior Day, you couldn't keep me off the field."

With running mate Josh Gordon sidelined with a high ankle sprain, Barsamian was a marked man as the Pirates looked to continue their recent dominance over PHS.

Although he rolled his ankle to put him in more pain, Barsamian was not to be denied as he ran for 120 yards and two touchdowns as PHS used a 14-0 fourth quarter to post an impressive 31-17 triumph.

The win improved the Little Tigers to 7-2 and gave them some momentum going into the playoffs where 7th-seeded PHS will play at No. 2 Monroe on November 13 in the NJSIAA Central Jersey Group III sectional.

The emotion of Senior Day helped give Barsamian the adrenaline to shake off his aches and pains as he rumbled through the

Pirate defense. "I love those guys," said Barsamian, referring to his class which is 20-strong.

"We really wanted to make something happen. In the huddle, when bad things happened, it wasn't 'it's your fault,' it was 'come on, we got this.' Everyone was right behind each other."

The seniors' bond was nowhere more evident than in the fourth quarter when PHS reeled off 14 unanswered points to break open a 17-17 contest.

"We have got a great group of seniors and the way we looked at it was that we had 12 minutes left on our home turf," said Barsamian.

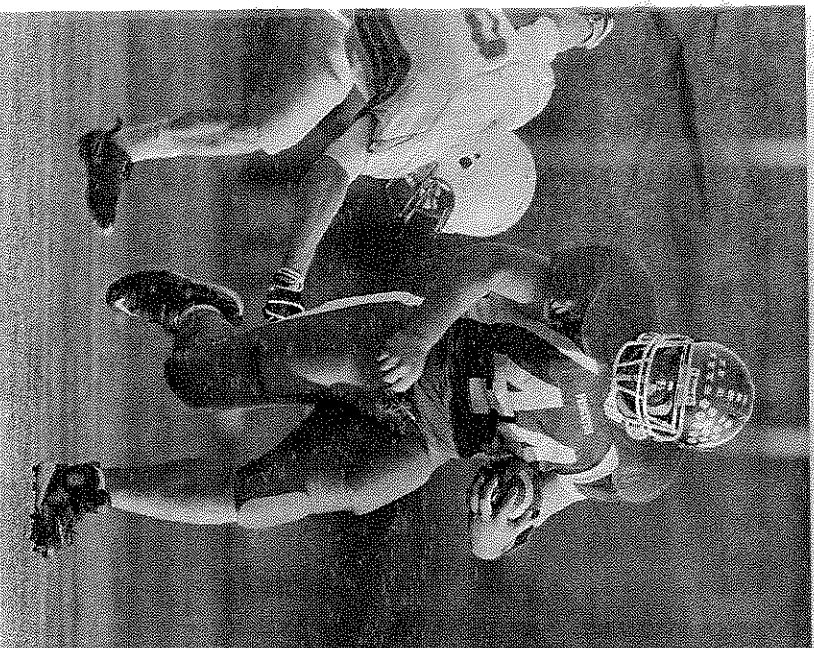
"Depending on how we do in the playoffs, we may never play here again. You rally behind each other."

Barsamian started the fourth quarter with a 15-yard run to get the Little tigers rolling and followed that up three plays later with a 36-yard rumble to get PHS deep in WW/P-S territory. The drive culminated with a one-yard TD run by Barsamian as PHS took the lead for good.

After a Jay Dwyer fumble recovery ended WW/P-S's next possession, PHS got the ball at the Pirate 35.

With a couple of runs by backup running back Ryan Rudich, PHS was knocking at the door again. This time, Little Tiger senior quarterback Mike Olenine found the end zone as he raced six yards to the flag as PHS built its lead to 31-17.

The Little Tiger defense



**SENIOR MOMENT:** Princeton High senior running back Trevor Barsamian rumbles for some of his 120 yards rushing last Saturday in PHS's 31-17 win over WW/P-S. The Little Tigers' big Senior Day effort lifted them to 7-2 on the season. PHS will open state playoff action on November 13 when the 7th-seeded Little Tigers will play at No. 2 Monroe in the NJSIAA Central Jersey Group III sectional.

*(Photo by Stephen Goldsmith)*

held from there and PHS got to celebrate its first win over powerful WW/P-S in years.

"Since I have been here, we have never beaten South," said Barsamian. "To win my last home game against a crosstown rival, it's great."

PHS head coach Steve Everette had a great feeling about the win as well.

"For the last three or four years, they have been the *creme de la creme* of the CVC," said Everette, referring to the Pirates.

"They are a playoff caliber team in a real tough Central Jersey Group IV and we beat them. That means we are in position to do the things that we need to come next weekend so we'll see."

In Everette's view, the PHS seniors have put the program in its current positive state.

"I have got 20 kids who have bought into what we have been preaching and teaching around here," said Everette.

"They have done a fantastic job. To be honest, they weren't even sad today. They were like 'coach this is business. Let's go out and handle our business.' They were so focused on what we had to do today. We started well, we finished well, and we played well in the middle."

In addition to Barsamian's heroics, PHS got some big performances from its other seniors. Wide receiver Nick Miranda produced a scintillating 83-yard touchdown reception in the second quarter to give the Little Tigers an early 7-3 lead. QB Olenine hit on 11-of-22 passes for 263 yards for the day with Doug Bryant making four receptions for 78 yards. Skye Ertin made two catches for 44 yards and had two interceptions.

In Everette's view, the offensive line provided the foundation for the Little Tigers' success.

"You know what, our offensive line did a great job," asserted Everette.

"I don't think that No. 75 kid [Louisville-bound Zack Hundertmark] had a tackle. We put our big kid [Omar Yousef] on their big kid. I don't know if our kid is good enough for Louisville but he did a great job blocking No. 75. They created some holes and Trevor felt good and got it rolling a bit."

Everette is hoping that his team's performance in the win over WW/P-S will help it keep rolling when it gets into playoff competition.

"I guess we are a playoff-caliber team," asserted Everette, who guided the Little Tigers to the playoffs in 2007, the program's first state tournament appearance since the mid-1990s.

"We'll see next week when we go and play whoever we have to play. Hopefully we will come and play with that kind of intensity next weekend."

Barsamian, for one, will be ready for the playoffs no matter what. "We came out today and said this is a playoff game," said Barsamian.

"It doesn't count but it matters. It counts in our hearts. We don't know who we are going to play but we know we are ready."

—Bill Alden

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