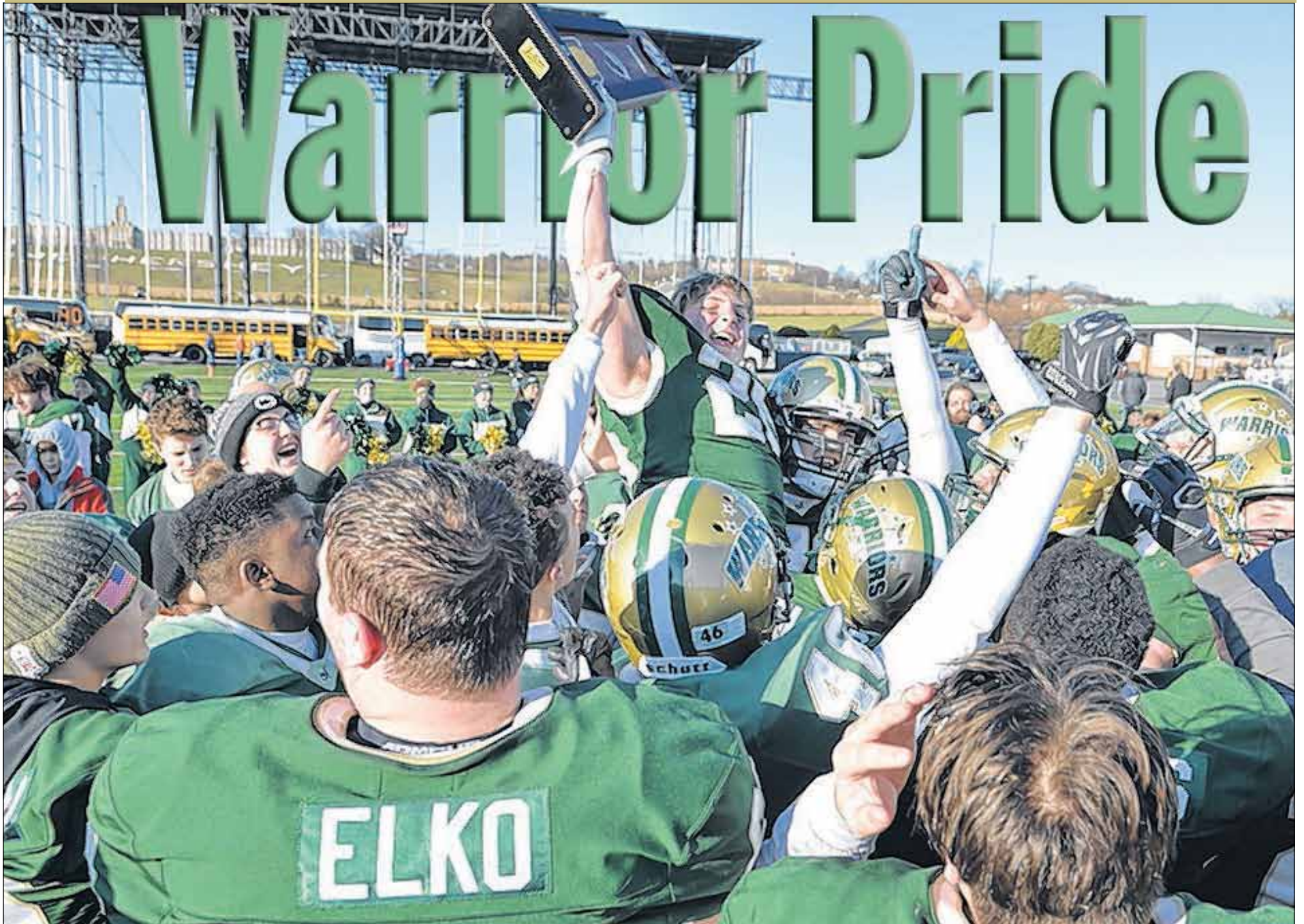


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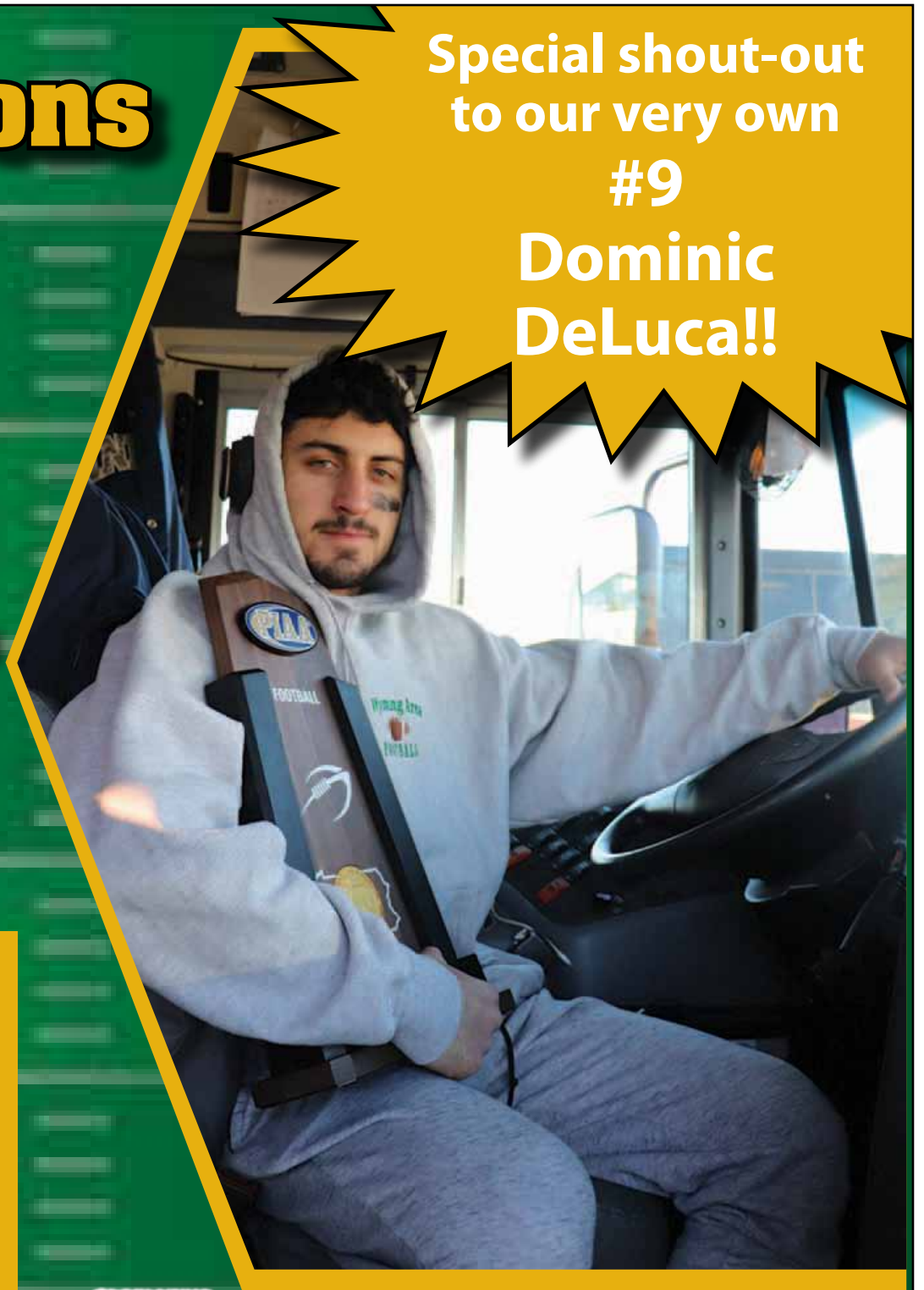
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Warrior Pride has never been stronger!

Born to be champions

State title years in the making for DeLuca, teammates

By Tony Callaio

For Times Leader Media Group

WEST PITTSTON — A day after securing the PIAA Class 3A state title game against Central Valley at Hersheypark Stadium, Wyoming Area quarterback Dominic DeLuca and family went out for breakfast where they were greeted by applause and cheers as they walked through the restaurant.

DeLuca, 18, and teammates pulled off one of the most exciting fourth-quarter comebacks for a state title game in recent memory by defeating Western Pennsylvania's Central Valley 21-14 after being down by two touchdowns.

The Warriors' senior quarterback started playing organized football at age of 5 for the West Pittston Rams junior football team where his father Carl, a former quarterback and three-year starter at Pittston Area, was one of his coaches. For the DeLuca's, sports has played a big role in the family.

DeLuca's mother Ree Ree was a former field hockey player at Bishop



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area's Dominic DeLuca ended his football career on a high note, helping his team win the school's first-ever state title while capturing the game's MVP award against Central Valley at Hersheypark Stadium on Dec. 7. DeLuca, 18, is shown holding the MVP award from the 2019 game against Pittston Area.

O'Reilly before playing at the collegiate level. DeLuca's older sister Sally excelled at field hockey at Wyoming Area and Bloomsburg University and older brother Dante also played football for the Warriors.

When DeLuca was playing junior football, he began his career as a quarterback before being changed to running back. By the time he goes to seventh grade at Wyoming Area, DeLuca told his coach at Wyoming Area he'd like to play quarter-

back.

"The coaches told me it was my choice to switch to quarterback and that's what I did," DeLuca said. "That's what my dad did in high school so that's what I wanted to do."

DeLuca pointed out a lot of the members of the seventh grade Warrior team were the same players that played in the state title game.

Over the next two years, the team began to be cohesive as they were learning and growing.

"Junior varsity, my fresh-

man year, we were undefeated beating Western Wayne and Prep and all those good teams," DeLuca recalled. "I thought we had a pretty good team but didn't look too much into the future."

After having a successful JV season his freshman year, the unexpected happened the next season. Longtime starting quarterback PJ Angeli suffered a season ending injury that thrust DeLuca into the number one spot leading

This one was for all the Warriors ... past and present

WEST PITTSTON — Standing amidst a sea of green and gold, I'll admit I never thought I'd see the day.

You see, I'm a Wyoming Area graduate. Class of 2014, a Warrior born and raised. I've seen a lot of teams come through this school, some good and some bad. I was there for the days of Nick O'Brien and Jeff Skursky tearing it up every Friday night.

But never did I think I'd be standing at the Jake, watching a group of the toughest, most resilient kids I've ever seen hoist a state championship trophy.

Walking through those gates was unlike any feeling I'd ever had before. I wasn't a football player, I'm much too brittle for that, but through friends I had always felt a kinship with the football team.

So getting to see the kids ring the bell, getting to shake Randy Spencer's hand and give Mike Fanti a hug, it just felt ... right.

When the call came in from my boss, I was ready. I was at my desk, casually working on an article when word came in: Wyoming Area was having a victory parade, would I go cover it?

Would I? Oh, you bet.

I knew the turnout would be big, but I never imagined that I'd see Warrior Nation line the streets from the Midway to the Jake. As the parade processed



Kevin Carroll
Warrior Pride

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Born

From page 5

the varsity team as a sophomore.

“Sophomore year we played a lot of the big schools like Williamsport, Berwick, Dallas, Wallenpaupak, Crestwood,” said DeLuca. “I was only 160-170 pounds and I took some beatings.”

Most 10th graders put in DeLuca’s position would have felt out of sorts, but he said he didn’t feel the pressure.

“I think I felt comfortable the whole way, honestly, all through sophomore year,” DeLuca said. “I mean it was a little bit of a learning experience sophomore year, but I wasn’t really scared to play, I was just like, I need to do my job.”

Going into junior year, there were high expectations on the team and they did have garner 11 wins against one loss before bowing out of district semifinals to Lakeland.

“We wanted to win districts but injuries killed us; there were a lot of injuries,” DeLuca recalled. “Six of our injured players that season had to have surgery.”

After losing out at a state run in 2018, DeLuca and company were determined more than ever to reach Hershey-ark Stadium.

DeLuca recalled Warrior Coach Kim Pace predicting Wyoming Area would reach the title game all through summer practices.

“We all thought we could make a big run to states, but Coach Pace, who we all thought was crazy during summer practices, kept saying, ‘This is for the state championship; we’re training for the state championship,’” DeLuca said. “We all thought that was crazy and we’ll never



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Dominic DeLuca, center, stands with his parents Carl and Ree DeLuca at their West Pittston home.



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Samuel Soloman looks to protect Warrior quarterback Dominic DeLuca as he looks for a receiver downfield in the state title game.

make it there, but we made it there and we won and it was a shocker.”

The Warriors suffered a big hit early in the 2019 campaign when feature running back

Corey Mruk went down with an injury for the second year in a row that, once again, put him out for the season.

Another key player, Charlie Banashefski, was injured

second quarter, the Warriors were only down by two scores before a last minute touchdown by Southern increased the margin to 21 points.

The Warriors’ defense kept Southern Columbia out of the end zone in the first and fourth quarters.

Even with the loss, the team held their heads up high.

“After that game, I felt like we could be a great team for the rest of the season, I felt like we could make a run at states,” DeLuca said. “We held that caliber offense to not much with their inside running game, they had to outside and I thought that was great.”

The Warriors learned a lot from the Southern Columbia loss were DeLuca felt it made them stronger.

“It was more of a defeat that we needed,” DeLuca explained. “It was a butt-kicking for us to keep our heads on our shoulders and not get a big head and I felt that was great for us for the rest of the season.”

The last game of the regular season was against crosstown rivals, Pittston Area, where history has shown anything could happen in that particular game.

“It didn’t matter who was on your team or what your record was, it was about who wanted to play and who wanted the game more,” DeLuca said. “I guess that day, we did.”

After the regular season was complete, the Warriors turned their attention to the playoffs with Lake-Lehman up first followed by Scranton Prep.

“Against Lehman, we came out to play and we shut them down,” DeLuca said. “When we got to Scranton Prep we knew we were against a four-year district champ and we wanted to shut that down. They hit us in the mouth; they were pretty physical, but we

in week eight only to return to the lineup for the district championship game.

DeLuca wasn’t worried with two key injuries to the lineup.

“Next man up, that’s what Wyoming Area football is about, we always have to be ready for the next man up,” DeLuca admitted. “Darren (Rodney) stepped up and had a huge year at running back which helped a ton and so did Leo Haros.”

As the season progressed, the Warriors were defeating the opposition by large margins with the exception of Lake-Lehman and Dunmore when they got the call to play powerhouse Southern Columbia in a non-conference game.

Having little time to prepare for the Southern game, the final score was 42-0 with the Warriors playing them tough. Toward the end of the

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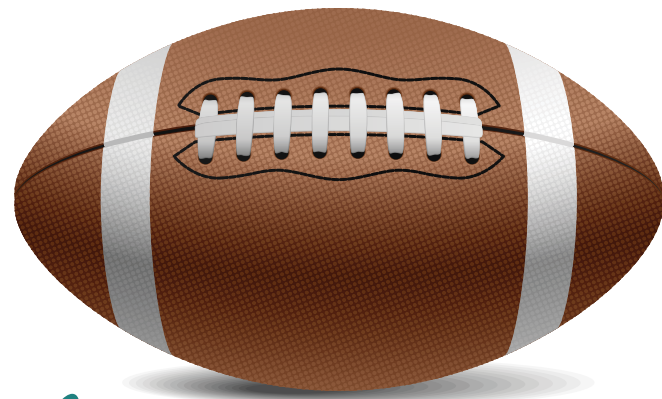
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Born

From page 8

played Wyoming Area smash-mouth football.”

The state quarterfinal game against Montoursville was someone DeLuca considered one of the best teams they played all season. “They gave us a run for the money.”

After defeating Montoursville 43-27 at Williamsport, the team looked towards the semifinal game against Tamaqua at what many felt was a home game at Wyoming Valley West Stadium.

“After Montoursville, we considered our next game as a business trip, we shut Tamaqua out and that was really huge,” DeLuca said. “We had to do our job, get our assignments done and play our football like we did all season.”

DeLuca admitted the team never looked ahead in the schedule taking one game at a time. Leading into the state final with Central Valley, the approach was no different.

“I knew they were a very good team, they had a lot of speed and they had a lot of athletes,” DeLuca reflected. “I knew we had to keep them contained and keep them between the tackles. Derek (Ambrosino) and Caleb (Graham) did a good job of that and our linebackers made the plays when we needed it. The secondary, I feel, did great and they had fast kids and really good route runners and we shut them down.”

DeLuca gives credit to 6-foot-4, 298 pounds senior lineman Samuel Solomon for stepping up his game in the 2019 campaign after being out for most of the 2018 season.

“He definitely brought out the energy and the hype and the physicality, he made us step up by being physical at practice, games and everything we do and I feel that was huge for us,”



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Warrior running back Darren Rodney gets through a huge hole against Central Valley.

DeLuca said.

DeLuca admitted the Warriors started out slow for the entire first half of the game against Central Valley but stepped up towards the end of the second quarter.

“In the second half, the third quarter they smashed us in the mouth,” DeLuca said. “We kept our heads up, we kept playing our football and when the fourth quarter came along, we played amazing.”

When the fourth quarter came along, me and Brian (Williams) connected on all those passes, Darren (Rodney) was running great, the line was blocking great and Riley Rusyn was huge for us with the 80-yard touchdown, I felt that changed the

whole game.”

The Rusyn touchdown was Wyoming Area’s first score on the day and the Warriors started to feel the momentum swing in their favor.

DeLuca chuckled as he admitted the pass was intended for Ambrosino and not Rusyn, but was happy with the outcome.

“I was getting pressured in the pocket and Coach Rich always told the receivers if the quarterback is pressured, to come back to him and give him a target,” DeLuca said. “I didn’t see Rusyn at all and I saw Derek coming back to me and I launched it up to him and I guess all of Rusyn’s backyard

See BORN | 29

All

From page 5

down Wyoming Avenue, it hit me.

Wyoming Area did it.

They hung with one of the best teams in the state, they never said die, they came back from 14 points down and they won the whole thing. The first team state title EVER to come to Wyoming Area.

I just couldn’t believe it.

Journalistic integrity and objectivity were difficult to keep in mind the minute I stepped onto that field. I hadn’t been on it since my senior year, when I and a pack of Warrior students famously defended the bell from our rivals across the river in Pittston.

It felt good. It felt like home.

I knew I had to seek out one person, first and foremost: Dominic DeLuca.

It’s only natural, right? I mean, the kid had just, on one good leg, quarterbacked his team to a state title. Was there any other option for the first interview of the night?

But talking to Dom DeLuca was special for me on a personal level.

I’ve known DeLuca since he was just a little kid, running roughshod around the West Pittston Little League, often with his mother Ree Ree chasing frantically behind.

He’s a good kid. Seeing him grow and mature over the years from wild child to state champion has been such a rewarding experience. No one deserves it more.

As he wiped tears from his eyes and embraced me after the ceremonial ring-

ing of the bell, I almost welled up myself. I’ll be honest, even though I did absolutely nothing to contribute to the Warrior’s run to a state championship, I felt like a champion, too.

And I wasn’t the only one. Fans and parents were crying, hugging and laughing as they took the field. This one was for all of us, too.

This was for everyone who came before, as well as everyone who would come after. This was for the Jim Pizanos, the Charlie McDermotts, the Farad Condrys, the Michael Lumleys and Tyler Rescinitis and Matt Dimick’s of yesteryear (yes, I did just namedrop all of my football-playing friends from back in the day). This is for the young kids in the West Pittston Rams and Exeter Panthers programs who dream of hoisting that state title trophy.

It’s not an impossible dream anymore. It’s reality.

I’d like to formally congratulate the 2019 Wyoming Area Warriors for accomplishing what so few get to say they’ve done. In high school football, there is no greater honor than winning state, and in a football-rich state like Pennsylvania, it just means a little bit more.

Well done, boys. Drinks are on me (in a few years when you’re all 21, of course), and maybe we’ll even hang your jersey from the rafters of Dowse’s Suds and Grub. Don’t ever forget the legacy you’ve made for yourselves, and the imprint you’ve left on this town.

You’ve left some mighty large shoes to fill.

Kevin Carroll is a Times Leader reported and graduate of Wyoming Area.

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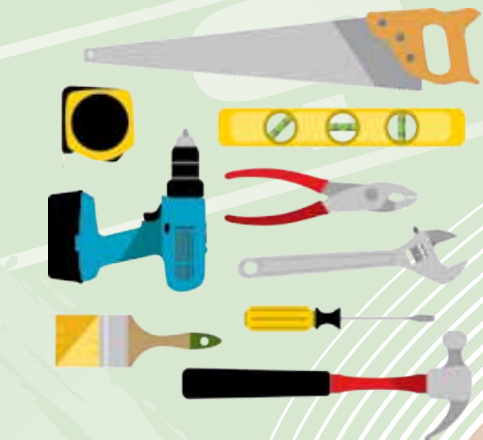
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GAME 1: WYOMING AREA 56, MID VALLEY 13

Wyoming Area smothers Mid Valley in debut

By Joe Soprano
jsoprano@timesleader.com

WEST PITSTON — Wyoming Area head coach Randy Spencer couldn't have asked for a better start to the high school football season.

Before the sun even set on Jake Sobeski Stadium on Friday night, Spencer's Warriors were well on their way to a 56-13 victory over Mid Valley with what was a nearly perfect first quarter of football.

"We came out and I thought we did exceptionally well on both sides of the ball," Spencer said. "Special teams executed at a high level. And I'm very happy with our young — in terms of experience — offensive line came together and played."

The Warriors (1-0) were in control from the start.

After recovering Mid Valley's opening kickoff at their own 47 yard line, Wyoming Area marched 53 yards in seven plays for the opening score and a 7-0 lead.

Quarterback Dominic DeLuca did much of the work with his feet. On the second play of the drive, DeLuca rushed around the left side of the Warriors' offensive line for 22 yards for a first and 10 at the Mid Valley 27. Three plays later he went around the left side again, running



Wyoming Area wide receiver Brian Williams pulls in a 19-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Dominic DeLuca during a high school football game in West Pittston on Friday night.

through two defenders at the goal line to score from 14 yards out.

Mid Valley went three

and out on its first possession of the game and gave the Warriors the ball back at Spartans' 45

after a punt.

This time, it took just six plays for Wyoming Area to find the end



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Quarterback Dominic DeLuca scampers in for a Wyoming Area touchdown against Mid Valley at Jake Sobeski Field Friday night in West Pittston.

Wyoming Area 56, Mid Valley 13
Mid Valley 0 0 0 13 — 13
Wyoming Area 28 21 7 0 — 56

First quarter

WA — Dominic DeLuca 9 run (Josh Cumbo kick)

WA — Brian Williams 19 pass from DeLuca (Stanley Moderski kick)

WA — Brian Williams 59 punt return (Cumbo kick)

WA — DeLuca 22 run (Moderski kick)

Second quarter

WA — Corey Mruk 23 run (Cumbo kick)

WA — Jacob Williams 30 interception return (Moderski kick)

WA — Brian Williams 1 run (Cumbo kick)

Third quarter

WA — Richie Hyzinski 9 run (Sydney Kruska)

Fourth quarter

MV — Jacob Manson 2 run (kick failed)

MV — Marc Perrone 1 run (Kick dood)

Team statisticsMVWA

First downs	7	13
Rushes-yards	33-136	27-229

Passing yards	0	23
Total yards	136	252
Passing	2-4-0	0-4-0
Sacked-yards lost	1-10	0-0
Punts-avg.	5-27	1-23
Fumbles-lost	0-0	1-0
Penalties-yards	4-30	6-26

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — MV, Sebastian Brudnicki 6(-8), Cristian Gonzalez 4(-2), Zachary Rebar 2-23, Patrick Ferke 1-9, Aaron Killino 3-0, Joe Killino 10-65, Marc Perrone 6-32, Darnell Calloway 3-17. WA, DeLuca 5-58, Corey Mruk 8-62, Dillon Williams 1-2, Darrem Rodney 5-37, Colby Gashi 1-18, Brian Williams 2-13, Jacob Williams 1-3, Jerrel Cephalonis 1-2, Richie Hyzinski 3-34.

PASSING — MV, Patrick Ferke 0-4-0-1. WA, DeLuca 2-4-1-0

RECEIVING — WA, Brian Williams 2-23

INTERCEPTIONS — WA, Jacob Williams 1-30

MISSED FGs — None.

zone. Corey Mruk had runs of 13 and 9 yards to move the Warriors inside the Spartans 20 yard line. DeLuca then found Brian Williams in the back corner of the

endzone from 19 yards out to put Wyoming Area up 14-0.

After another three and out by Wyoming

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Born

From page 17

football days paid off and came across the middle and took it long.”

After playing tough defense, the Warriors took over before facing a 4th down play at the four-yard line when DeLuca hit a wide open Derek Ambrosino for a score and with a successful PAT, the game was dead even at 14 with 4:06 left in the game.

“I knew once we tied the game, we had a lot of time left,” DeLuca admits. “We’ve been down before in a fourth quarter and I felt there was a lot of time left. We knew we had to come back and I told the line to give me more seconds, hold on your blocks, and start getting a push up front and we could change the whole game.”

Eventually Wyoming Area got the ball back with 1:27 on the clock when DeLuca tossed a 39-yard pass to Brian Williams to the one-yard line when DeLuca took the ball on a quarterback sneak over the left side of the line to score taking the lead for the first time in the game with 41-seconds left.

“I knew they still had time to go down the field and they did,” DeLuca said. “They got down to the 30-yard line eventually and had a fourth and one when the Warriors held one last time.”

“It doesn’t feel real at all, I’ve been dreaming about this for very long time,” admitted DeLuca. “I grew up watching all

the Hershey games and it didn’t feel real when it happened. We just won it and the emotions were high for everyone. Somebody has to win and someone has to lose, that’s a part of the game.”

At the completion of the game, the team was deluged with media especially wanting an interview with DeLuca who had been named MVP.

The team drove back to Wyoming Valley where the Warrior motorcade was escorted by Greater Pittston fire trucks and emergency vehicles from the Midway Shopping Center to Anthony “Jake” Sobeski Field.

At Sobeski Field, the Warrior players rang the school bell after a victory as they had done for many victories.

Since the championship game, life has changed dramatically for DeLuca where the post-game interviews continue, endless phone calls and text messages and colleges contacting him. This past week, DeLuca had a D-1 offer to play at Villanova University.

“He got sent home from Gerrity’s (supermarket) where he works,” Ree Ree said. “He was drawing too much of a crowd and it was distracting.”

DeLuca will take a lot from the championship game but he has one regret, his biggest fan and grandfather Malcolm DeLuca passed away in April 2018.

“Yeah, didn’t see my junior year and my senior year,” DeLuca said. “But I played for him and I know he was watching.”

GAME 2: WYOMING AREA 34, SCRANTON PREP 0

Wyoming Area leaves no doubt

By John Erzar

jerzar@timesleader.com

SCRANTON —

There was no show-down Saturday afternoon. Just sheer domination.

And Wyoming Area supplied it.

The Warriors used a vicious defense that created five turnovers and shut down Scranton Prep’s running game to dismantle the four-time District 2 Class 3A champion 34-0 in a non-conference game at Scranton Memorial Stadium.

Defensive back Dominic DeLuca and linebacker FJ Braccini had interceptions, with DeLuca returning his pick 28 yards for a touchdown. DeLuca also forced and recovered a fumble, one of three by Prep. Braccini also had a forced fumble.

Defensive lineman Sam Solomon had all three sacks and when Prep quarterback Paddy Grady did get off a pass, he or his receiver was often greeted with a violent hit.

“We saw on film that they were able to break tackles,” DeLuca said. “We needed to come down hill, hit them hard and not let go. Make sure we got them to the ground.”

It added up to Prep (1-1) being shut out in the regular season

Wyoming Area 34, Prep 0
Wyoming Area 6 14 14 0 — 34
Scranton Prep 0 0 0 0 — 0

First quarter

WA — Leonardo Haros 3 run (kick blocked), 2:57

Second quarter

WA — Dominic DeLuca 7 run (run failed), 10:20

WA — DeLuca 28 interception return (FJ Braccini from DeLuca), 3:23

Third quarter

WA — Brian Williams 44 pass from DeLuca (Stanley Moderski kick), 8:04

WA — Corey Mruk 1 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 1:45

Team statistics	WA	SP
First downs	14	11
Rushes-yards	36-13	123(-1)
Passing yards	122	146
Total yards	253	145
Passing	6-13-21	6-29-2
Sacked-yards lost	0-0	3-19
Punts-avg.	2-44.5	4-22.2
Fumbles-lost	1-0	5-3

Penalties-yards 8-752-30

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Wyoming Area, C.Mruk 14-16, DeLuca 9-58, Braccini 2-7, Haros 4-11, Dillon Williams 2-8, Drew Mruk 4-1, Jacob Williams 1-1, team 1-(minus-1). Scranton Prep, Tucker Johnson 3-1, Paddy Grady 7-(minus-10), London Montgomery 3-7, Ryan McAndrew 7-19, Aden Johnson 1-(minus-2), TJ Roque 1-3, team 1-(minus-21).

PASSING — Wyoming Area, DeLuca 6-11-1-122, J.Williams 0-2-1-0. Scranton Prep, Grady 16-28-2-145, Gianni Argenta 0-1-0-0.

RECEIVING — Wyoming Area, B.Williams 4-76, C.Mruk 1-9, J.Williams 1-37. Scranton Prep, Rob Rossi 4-15, Brendan Coleran 3-41, Carter Odell 7-66, Johnson 1-9, Christian Granjel 1-15.

INTERCEPTIONS — Wyoming Area, DeLuca 1-28, Braccini 1-11. Scranton Prep, Odell 1-0, McAndrew 1-14.



Braccini

their share of troubles.

Braccini received a bonus on Prep’s 10th play of the third quarter. He came up for a big hit on a receiver, but instead had the ball roll off the Prep player and into his arms. After a couple of runs by running back Corey Mruk, DeLuca dropped a pass over a defender and into the hands of receiver Brian Williams for a 44-yard touchdown.

Prep’s next possession also ended in a turnover as DeLuca stripped the ball and recovered it. Mruk capped the scoring a short time later with a 1-yard run.

The Cavaliers’ deepest journey inside Wyoming Area territory came early in the fourth quarter. They drove to the Warriors 10-yard line, but Solomon flattened Grady for a sack on third down, ending the threat.

for the first time since Scranton defeated the Cavaliers 29-0 in Week 5 of the 2011 season. The shutout was only the third suffered by Prep in its last 99 games, with the other a 35-0 loss to Middletown in the 2017 PIAA Class 3A state quarterfinals.

“We’re just in that situation where we have those type of kids,” Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. “Five four-year starters, we got talented guys who’ve gotten to that point they have that confidence on the field.

“Now it’s a matter of can they come together, can they bring everyone together and form that type of team that can go on that great run. Today was the kind of game where you find answers to those questions.”

The answers came quickly.

Braccini forced a

fumble on Prep’s second play from scrimmage and seven plays later running back Leonardo Haros scored from three yards out. The Cavaliers went three-and-out on their next possession and Wyoming Area (2-0) went on another seven-play scoring drive.

DeLuca banged off a few defenders on a 17-yard run to put the ball at the Prep 7-yard line and scored on another run on the next play. DeLuca was back in the end zone four plays later with a 28-yard interception return to boost the lead to 20-0 at halftime.

With the running game completely obliterated in the first half, Prep turned to a short passing game in the third quarter in an effort to rally. The Cavaliers had middling success in the change of strategy, but also had

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GAME 3: WYOMING AREA 34, NORTHWEST AREA 3

Wyoming Area rolls past Northwest

By Ross Turetsky
For Times Leader

UNION TWP. — The visiting Wyoming Area Warriors started out slow on the road Friday night, but picked it up and ran away with a dominant 34-3 Wyoming Valley Conference victory over the Northwest Rangers to remain undefeated.

Coming into the ball game both squads were red hot, as Northwest was 2-0 after squeaking out an 8-7 win over Lackawanna Trail in its opener and last week crushing Holy Redeemer 43-7. Meanwhile, Wyoming Area was riding high after two blowout wins to start the season, as the Warriors routed Mid Valley 56-13 in their opener and then last

week shut out Scranton Prep 34-0.

Northwest controlled the entire first quarter and even the first minutes of the second stanza. Its lengthy and impressive opening drive lasted all the way until 10:26 left in the second quarter, when kicker Jack Wessler connected on a 33-yard field goal to give the Rangers a 3-0 lead.

Not only was Northwest's offense rolling and controlling the clock, the Rangers ate up so much time earlier on in the contest that they helped their defense by not allowing the Wyoming Area offense to take the field for a big chunk of the game.

However, that early Northwest momentum would be short lived, as

Wyoming Area ripped off 34 unanswered consecutive points.

The Warriors started off quickly, as they took their first kickoff return all the way to the Northwest 22-yard line. That set up a quick 16-yard touchdown scamper from senior running back Corey Mruk on just the team's second play on offense in the game to snatch the lead at 6-3 with 9:29 left in the first half.

Less than four minutes later, Mruk was heard from again, as he took another 16-yard rush all the way to the house to up his club's advantage at 12-3, a lead the Warriors took into halftime.

Another big turning point in the game was after Northwest successfully surprised Wyoming

Wyoming Area 34,		Northwest Area 3	
WA	0	12	8 14-34
NA	0	3	0 0-3
Second Quarter			
NA — Jack Wessler makes 33 yard FG, 10:26.			
WA — Corey Mruk 16 run (Josh Cumbo misses extra pt.), 9:29.			
WA — Corey Mruk 16 run (2pt. fails), 5:45.			
Third Quarter			
WA — Corey Mruk 56 run (2 pt. good), 10:42.			
Fourth Quarter			
WA — Dillon Williams 79 INT Return (Cumbo makes extra pt.), 11:22.			
WA — Riley Rusyn 41 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Cumbo makes extra pt.), 2:47.			
Team statistics	WA	NA	
First downs	13	13	
Rushes-yards	198	66	
Passing yards	134	69	
Total yards	332	135	

Passing	6-8-1-0	6-11-0-2
Sacked-yards lost	0-0	2-13
Punts-avg.	1-48	5-58
Fumbles-lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties-yards	16-12	52-10

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — WA, Corey Mruk 6-104, F.J. Braccini 3-39, Dominic DeLuca 4-32, Darren Rodney 1-2, Dillon Williams 1-3, Leonardo Haros 2-18. NA, George May 24-39, Jake Bobersky 11-29, Ryan Wassel 6-0, Chase Biller 1-3, Hunter Gmitter 2-0, J.T. Brubaker 1-neg. 5.

PASSING — WA, Dominic DeLuca 6-8-134-1-0. NA, Ryan Wassel 6-11-69-0-2.

RECEIVING — WA, Brian Williams 4-61, Riley Rusyn 1-41, Corey Mruk 1-32. NA, John Savakinus 2-24, Jake Bobersky 1-3, Chase Biller 1-8, J.T. Brubaker 2-34.

INTERCEPTIONS — WA, Darren Rodney 1-0, Dillon Williams 1-79. NA, None.

FIELD GOALS — WA, None. NA, Jack Wessler 1-33.

Area and recovered the opening second half outside kick. The Rangers offense gave that momentum back when Wyoming Area's Darren Rodney picked off a pass.

Wyoming Area took advantage of that mistake and Mruk electrified his sideline with a

56-yard touchdown run with 10:42 left in the third period to up the Warriors lead at 20-3. On the evening, Mruk ran for a game high 104-yards on just six carries and scored three touchdowns all coming from the mighty ground game.

The game was finally

clinched and broken open, when senior Dillon Williams intercepted another pass just as Northwest was driving deep into enemy territory and on the verge of tightening up the ball game. Williams jumped in front of a would-be high arching screen pass to Rangers tailback George May, and sprinted down the sidelines for a 79-yard interception touchdown return to increase the Wyoming Area lead to 27-3 just 38 seconds into the fourth and final quarter of play.

The final score came with just 2:47 left in regulation when senior signal caller Dominic DeLuca hooked up in the end zone on a 41-yard touchdown bomb through the air to fellow senior Riley Rusyn.

Game 1

From page 20

Area, Williams gave Wyoming Area a three-score lead with a zig-zagging 59-yard punt return for a touchdown and a 21-0 lead.

"I was supposed to take it left," Williams said of the score. "I saw no room there, so I took it up the middle, busted out right and then just out ran everybody."

DeLuca would add

another rushing touchdown before the first quarter was over, scoring from 22 yards out, and the Warriors led 28-0 with 40 seconds still left in the first quarter.

The Warrior defense got in on the scoring in the second quarter.

After Mruk made it 35-0 with a 16-yard touchdown run with 8:10 left in the half, Jacob Williams picked off at Patrick Ferke pass and returned it 30 yards for a touchdown and a 42-0 lead with 7:02 left in the half.

Brian Williams added another touchdown on a 1-yard end around with just 1:13 left in the half as the Warrior defense continued to baffle the Spartans.

Mid Valley didn't get its first first down of the game until there was just 20 seconds left in the first half.

Richie Hyzinski scored the Warriors' final touchdown to make it 56-0 with 4:38 left in the third quarter before Mid Valley added two touchdowns in the fourth quarter.



The Wyoming Area defense gang tackles a Mid Valley runner during Friday night's football game in West Pittston.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader



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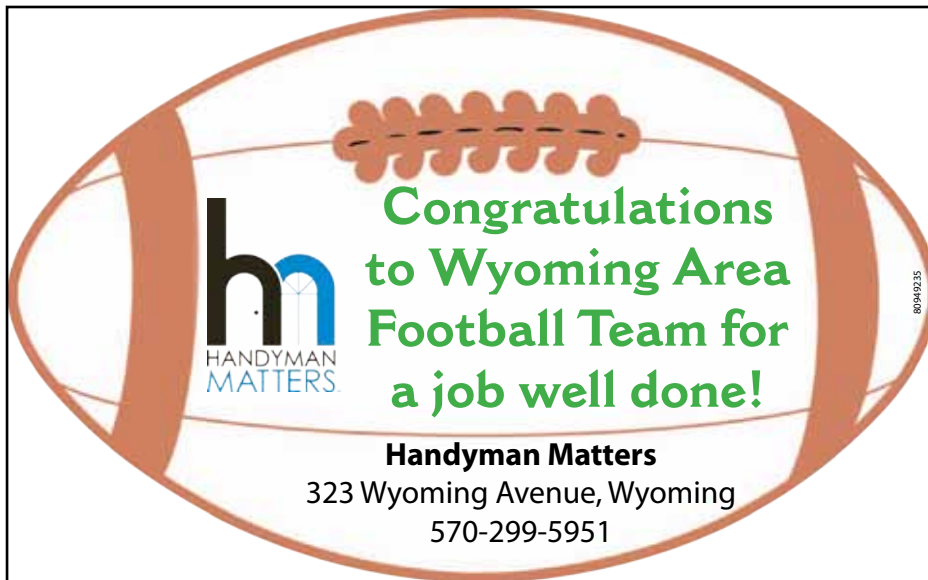
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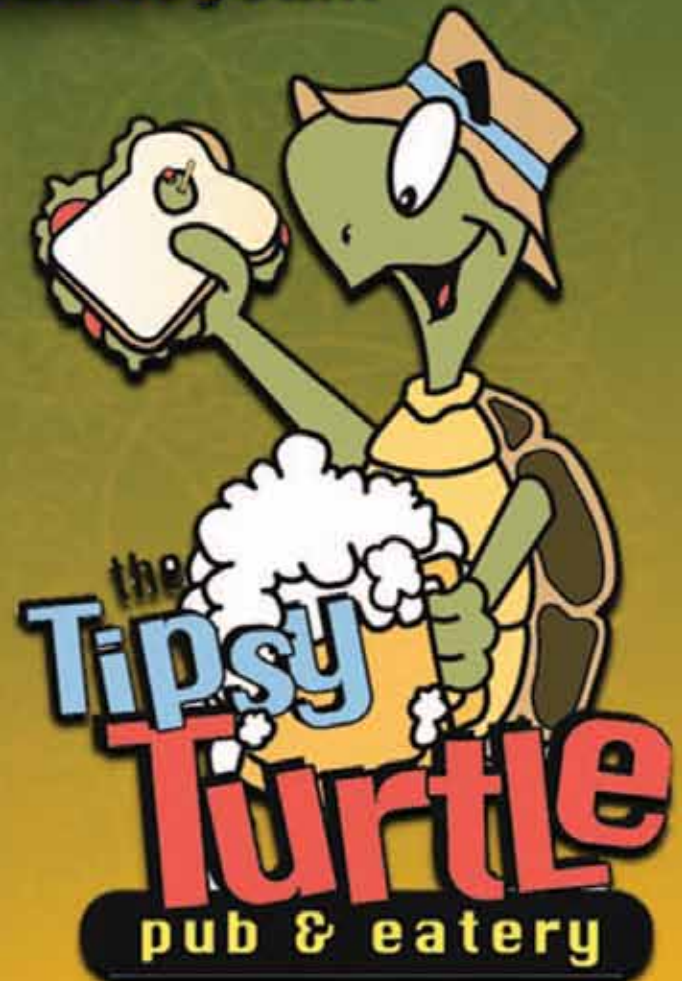
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Wyoming Area coaches, players and cheer squad pose for one last photo at Hersheypark Stadium as the 2019 Class 3A state title champions.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

GAME 4: WYOMING AREA 48, NANTICOKE AREA 7

Warriors roll on after season-ending injury to top rusher Mruk

By Dave Rosengrant
For Times Leader

NANTICOKE — When Corey Mruk left last week's Wyoming Area win with an injury, the severity wasn't known.

Soon after, it was learned that the running back suffered a devastating knee injury and his season ended early for the second straight year.

Luckily for the Warriors, they have plenty of depth at the position. The depth showed on Friday night against Nanticoke Area as 12 different players carried the ball, four different backs scored rushing touchdowns and

Wyoming Area 48, Nanticoke Area 7			
Wyoming Area	28	14	6
Nanticoke Area	0	0	0
Final Score			
Wyoming Area	48		
Nanticoke Area	7		
First Quarter			
WA	B. Williams 4 pass from DeLuca (Moderski kick) 10:47		
WA	Graham 21 pass from DeLuca (Moderski kick) 4:04		
WA	Rodney 11 run (Moderski kick) 3:09		
WA	Haros 6 run (Moderski kick) :12		
Second Quarter			
WA	Giambra 15 run (Moderski kick) 10:04		
WA	D. Mruk 20 run (Moderski kick) 2:19		
Third Quarter			
WA	D. Mruk 10 run (kick failed) 3:34		
Fourth Quarter			
NAN	Park 6 run (Klepadlo kick) 10:19		
Team statistics			
	WA	NA	
First downs	14	9	
Rushes-yards	27-220	42-119	
Passing yards	81	7	
Total yards	301	126	
Passing	3-5-0	2-5-0	
Sacks by-yards lost	0-0	0-0	
Punts-avg.	0-0-0	4-24.8	
Fumbles-lost	0-0	5-1	
Penalties-yards	3-35	4-45	
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS			
PASSING — WA, DeLuca 3-4-0-81, Sokach-Minnick 0-1-0-0. NA, Marcella 2-5-0-7.			
RUSHING — WA, Rodney 7-44, DeLuca 2-31, D. Williams 1-3, Z. Williams 1-9, Haros 1-6, Giambra 2-22, Scotto-Diluzio 1-13, D. Mruk 3-52, Rusyn 1-5, Sciandra 5-8, Hyzinski 1-25, Gashi 1-3, TEAM 1-(minus-1). NA, Park 6-32, Lohman 18-52, Kudrako-Kashatus 7-29, Ammons 4-16, Marcella 4-(minus-1), TEAM 3-(minus-9).			
RECEIVING — WA, B. Williams 2-60, Graham 1-21. NA, Ammons 1-7.			
INTERCEPTIONS — none			
MISSED FGS — none			

the team combined to run for 220 yards as the Warriors defeated the Trojans 48-7.

“Without Mruk, it's a

huge loss, offensively and defensively, but it's next man up,” Warriors quarterback Dominic DeLuca said. “That's what we've

been saying all year the last two seasons. ... I have a lot of confidence in (the other backs). I trust them with the ball, and I think they'll get the job done just as well.”

Mruk, who led the team in rushing last season with more than 1,000 and was well on his way to reaching the milestone this season, was on crutches on the sideline and was in good spirits cheering on his team.

“It's heartbreaking,” Warriors coach Randy Spencer said. “Corey's been playing for us since a freshman. He was looking very strong this year. It's a heartbreak

whenever anybody suffers an injury like that. One of our senior leaders, an outstanding leader. My heart breaks for him. But he's handling it as good as anybody.”

Without the standout runner, the Warriors turned to a plethora of backs on Friday night. After DeLuca got the scoring started with a pair of touchdown passes in the first quarter to Brian Williams and Caleb Graham for a quick 14-0 lead, the running game took over.

Darren Rodney (11 yards), Leo Haros (6 yards), Vincenzo Giambra (1 yard) and Drew Mruk

(20 yards) all had first-half scores as Wyoming Area (4-0) led 42-0 at halftime. Drew Mruk added a 10-yard TD scamper in the third quarter. The younger Mruk, a freshman, went for a game-high 52 yards on just three carries.

“Unfortunately, we're familiar with losing key guys, so guys who have been a part of the team the last several years have been aware of injuries like that,” Spencer said. “And in past years, they've done a great job stepping up.”

“I think again tonight

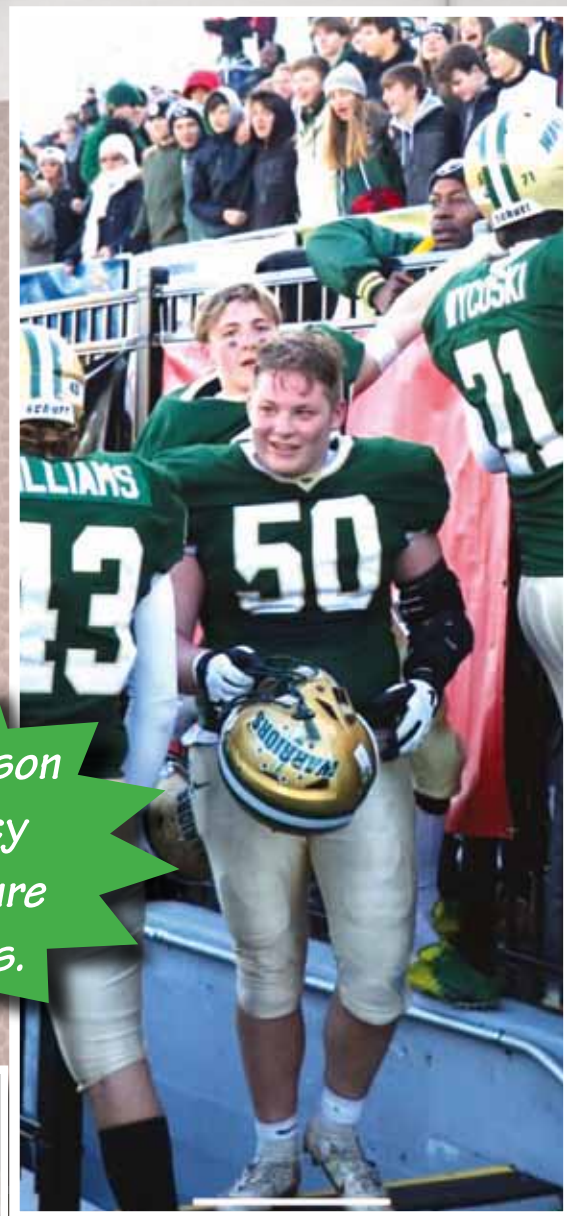
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Grammy, Poppy,
Uncle Duke,
Uncle Ryan, and
Ashley**



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Game 4

From page 37

Charlie Banashefski stepped up defensively. And offensively, we've got a lot of guys who can run the ball, are very talented backs and stepped up for Corey and certainly carried his workload for him tonight."

The Warriors defense also dominated on the evening, holding the Trojans to 127 total yards and just 24 total yards in the first half with the first team in the game.

The Trojans (0-4) struggled mightily offensively, fumbling five times, losing one, and didn't get much offense going until the second half. That's when Pierson Park picked up a 6-yard TD run in the first two minutes of the fourth quarter. The team also put together a goal-line stand in the fourth quarter when the Warriors drove to the 3, but the Nanticoke Area defense forced a turnover on downs.

"We played hard. But that's why they're one of the top-ranked teams in the state," Trojans coach Ron Bruza said. "We just gotta start punching the ball in the end zone and taking care of our own. We can't make mistakes against a team like that.

"Going forward, we got a bunch of seniors that can play football. We got our homecoming game coming up next week with Holy Redeemer. We got a few games coming up that we can at least be positive and actually be productive in. So we just keep plugging away."

GAME 5: WYOMING AREA 49, TUNKHANNOCK 10



Zachary Allen | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area's Darren Rodney (No. 1) fends off Tunkhannock's Nathan Lord (No. 15) during Friday's game.

Warriors roll past Tunkhannock

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

WEST PITTSTON — Just in case they forgot, the Wyoming Area Warriors were reminded on several occasions this week by their coaches.

Two weeks in a row, Tunkhannock was down big and rallied for wins.

"They were nonstop talking about it every day," Wyoming Area receiver Brian Williams

said.

Some deficits, though, are just too much to overcome, and Wyoming Area made sure there would be no second-half Tunkhannock heroics on Friday night.

The Warriors scored on all six of their first-half possessions, shut down Tunkhannock's offense completely and rolled to a 49-10 victory in a Wyoming Valley Conference

interdivisional game.

Running back Darren Rodney, starting in place of injured Corey Mruk, ran for 118 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries. All came in the first half. Between Rodney's TD runs, quarterback Dominic DeLuca threw TD passes of 19 and 47 yards to Williams and 37 yards to tight end Caleb Graham.

The TD passes to Williams marked the fifth time DeLuca

has connected for scores this season with his senior classmate.

"I kind of give him that look that I'm going up and I'm going to get it for you and we're going to get this touchdown," Williams said.

DeLuca's other touchdown pass hit Graham in stride running down the left hashmarks.

Wyoming Area (5-0) put the

Game 5

From page 39

final touches on the 42-0 halftime lead by driving 97 yards for its sixth touchdown. Zajquay Williamson ran in from 12 yards out with 2:35 in the second quarter, giving the Warriors 358 yards through the first half.

“(Tunkhannock) has done a great job the last couple of weeks of coming from behind and competing at a high level, especially late in games,” Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. “So I thought it was very important for us to get off to a fast start. We were able to do that and defensively we were getting a little pressure, play a little tight coverage and were able to be successful with that early.”

Tunkhannock quarterback Jack Chilson entered the game with the most passing yards in the WVC, but was just 4-of-11 for 17 yards in the first half. The ground game wasn't much better as the Tigers (3-2) had just 29 yards at the break.

Tunkhannock crossed midfield once in the first half, moving to the Wyoming Area 38-yard line midway through the second half. Wyoming Area defensive end Derek Ambrosino, though, recorded consecutive sacks to end the threat.

The entire second half was played by the reserves from both sides. Tunkhannock scored its only touchdown on a 6-yard pass from Ben Chilson to Nathan Lord with 8:33 left in the fourth quarter.



Wyoming Area's Dominic DeLuca avoids Tunkhannock defenders during Friday's game.

Zachary Allen | For Times Leader



Wyoming Area's Darren Rodney finished with 118 yards and two touchdowns, all coming in the first half Friday night.

Zachary Allen | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area 49, Tunkhannock 10

Tunkhannock	0	0	3	7-10
Wyoming Area	28	14	0	7-49

First quarter

WA — Darren Rodney 6 run (Stanley Moderski kick), 7:53

WA — Brian Williams 19 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Josh Cumbo kick), 6:26

WA — Caleb Graham 37 pass from DeLuca (Moderski kick), 3:46

WA — B.Williams 47 pass from DeLuca (Cumbo kick), 0:30

Second quarter

WA — Rodney 5 run (Moderski kick), 8:27

WA — Zajquay Williamson 12 run (Sydney Kruszka kick), 2:35

Third quarter

TUNK — Jaxson Montross 32 FG, 4:40

Fourth quarter

TUNK — Nathan Lord 6 pass from Ben Chilson (Montross kick), 8:33

WA — Vincenzo Nova 1 pass from Blaise Sokach-Minnick (Kruszka kick), 1:35

Team statistics	TUN	WA
First downs	5	22
Rushes-yards	19-49	40-269
Passing yards	65	185

Total yards	114	454
Passing	6-19-1	6-14-0
Sacked-yards lost	2-17	0-0
Punts-avg.	6-40	2-32
Fumbles-lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties-yards	3-39	7-37

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Tunkhannock, Gavin D'Amato 5-11, Jack Chilson 4-1, Ty Konen 9-18, Jake Frisco 1-3, Matt Prebola 1-7, B.Chilson 1-0, Connor Elgin 2-9. Wyoming Area, Rodney 14-118, DeLuca 3-56, Leo Haros 2-24, Dillon Williams 1-0, FJ Braccini 1-10, Zajquay Williamson 2-11, Enzo Scott-Diluzo 1-0, Drew Mruk 6-32, Richie Hyzinski 6-30, Daniel Angus 2-7, Colby Gashi 1-12, team 1-(minus-26).

PASSING — Tunkhannock, J.Chilson 4-11-0-17, B.Chilson 2-8-1-48. Wyoming Area, DeLuca 4-8-0-144, Sokach-Minnick 2-6-0-41.

RECEIVING — Tunkhannock, Prebola 2-9, D'Amato 1-(minus-4), Jhama Zacharias 1-12, Evan Sackmann 1-42, Nathan Lord 1-6. Wyoming Area, B.Williams 2-66, Graham 1-37, Riley Rusyn 1-41, Usamah Alansari 1-40, Nova 1-1.

INTERCEPTIONS — Wyoming Area, Nick Ross 1-0.

MISSED FGs — none.

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Congratulations to the players, coaches, cheerleaders, cheer coaches, band, band directors and all the staff and parents who tirelessly devoted themselves to the success of this season. And to the players, you ignited a spark that will burn forever in the history of Wyoming Area. Enjoy the success of all your hard work!

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GAME 6: WYOMING AREA 35, LAKE-LEHMAN 30

Warriors rally to defeat Lehman

By John Erzar

jerzar@timesleader.com

LEHMAN TWP. — Wyoming Area's first-team defense hadn't allowed a point all season. By half-time Friday night, the unit had surrendered 24.

But the defense made a play in the third quarter that flipped the momentum as the Warriors rallied to defeat Lake-Lehman 35-30 in a Wyoming Valley Conference Division 3A-A game.

Wyoming Area improved to 6-0. Lehman fell to 4-2.

Wyoming Area cut the deficit to 24-21 on a 1-yard TD run by Darren Rodney with 5:13 left in the third quarter. Lehman, though, drove to the Warriors 20-yard line on its ensuing possession with a 41-yard run by quarterback Ethan Adams the big play of the drive.

From there, misfortune struck for the Black Knights. They fumbled in the backfield and as a few Warriors tried to pick up the loose ball it kept rolling and rolling. Linebacker FJ Braccini finally flopped on the ball at midfield, giving Wyoming Area excellent field position.

Rodney ran for an 8-yard score four plays later, putting Wyoming Area up for good 28-24 with 20 seconds left in the third quarter.

Wyoming Area's defense



Wyoming Area quarterback Dominic DeLuca runs a keeper down the left sideline for a touchdown against Lake-Lehman in WVC football action Friday night in Lehman Township.

Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

also came up big late in the second quarter, holding Lehman to a field goal after the Black Knights had a first-and-goal from

the Warriors 5-yard line.

"Any stop is a big stop," Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. "But making there going

into the half, making it a 10-point deficit instead of a two-touchdown lead. That hopefully starts you going the other way, but

you still have to answer the bell in the second half."

Rodney certainly did. He ran eight times for 28

yards in the first half, but finished with 21 carries for 145 yards. Rodney,

See GAME 6 | 45



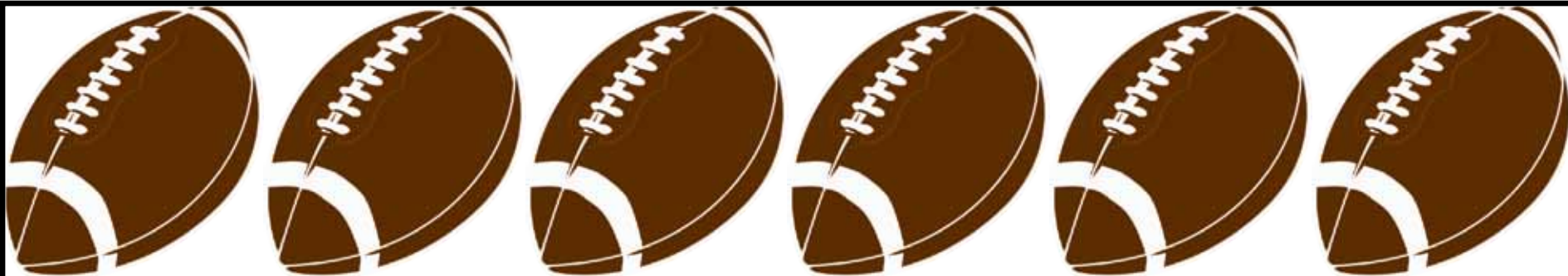
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Game 6

From page 42

who is replacing injured starter Corey Mruk, added his third TD of the game with 2:16 left in the fourth quarter to bump the lead to 35-24. He and quarterback Dominic DeLuca, who finished with 167 yards on 14 rushes, carried the ball on all but one play in the second half. The Warriors threw just one pass after halftime.

“Just went that way,” Rodney said. “One play at a time. Stepping up. Next man up and keep it going.”

Lehman couldn't keep its offensive output going in the second half.

Adams torched the Wyoming Area secondary twice in the first half, hitting on TD passes of 52 yards to Casey Kaminski and 66 yards to Luke Spencer. Both came on fly patterns where the Lehman receivers just ran past their defenders.

But after gaining 259 yards in the first half, the Black Knights had 86 more in the final two quarters. Many came on a scoring drive with Kaminski catching his second touchdown pass of the game with 24 seconds remain.

DeLuca then fielded an onside kick attempt to seal the win.

“Our kids fought to the end,” Lehman coach Jerry Gilsky said. “We played a state-ranked team and of all the teams they've played we're the ones who gave them a show.”



Wyoming Area's Zajquay Williamson makes a long gain against Lake-Lehman Friday night in Lehman Township.

Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area 35, Lake-Lehman 30

Wyoming Area 0 14 14 7-35

Lake-Lehman 7 17 0 6-30

First quarter

LL — Casey Kaminski 35 run (Luke Spencer kick), 6:28

Second quarter

WA — Brian Williams 38 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Josh Cumbo kick), 11:54

LL — Kaminski 52 pass from Ethan Adams (Spencer kick), 9:56

WA — DeLuca 42 run (Stanley Moderski kick), 8:29

LL — Spencer 66 pass from Adams (Spencer kick), 7:18

LL — Spencer 24 FG, 1:49

Third quarter

WA — Darren Rodney 1 run (Cumbo kick), 5:13

WA — Rodney 8 run (Moderski kick), 0:20

Fourth quarter

WA — Rodney 2 run (Cumbo kick), 2:16

LL — Kaminski 4 pass from Adams (pass failed), 0:24

Team statistics W ALL

First downs	16	17
Rushes-yards	40-320	37-104
Passing yards	55	241
Total yards	375	345
Passing	2-8-0	16-23-0
Sacked-yards lost	0-0	1-6
Punts-avg.	3-37	4-42.3
Fumbles-lost	3-3	6-3
Penalties-yards	10-70	3-17

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Wyoming Area, Rodney 21-145, DeLu-

ca 14-167, Zajquay Williamson 1-(minus-3), Leo Haros 2-6, FJ Braccini 1-6, team 1-(minus-1), Lehman, Zack Kojadinovich 13-28, Adams 18-33, Kaminski 1-35, Ryan Eiden 3-8.

PASSING — Wyoming Area, DeLuca 2-8-0-55. Lehman, Adams 16-23-0-241.

RECEIVING — Wyoming Area, Haros 1-17, B. Williams 1-38. Lehman, Eiden 7-69, Kaminski 4-75, Spencer 3-73, Kojadinovich 2-24.

INTERCEPTIONS — none.

MISSED FGs — none.

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the Administration,
Faculty, and Staff
at Wyoming Area
School District!*





The Warrior team is shown celebrating with the student body section of the bleachers.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader
Wyoming Area QB and game MVP Dominic DeLuca looks for receiver Derek Ambrosino in the end zone for a touchdown.

Warrior offensive coordinator Coach Rich Musinski passes on the next play to quarterback Dominic DeLuca.



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader
Brian Willams (6) and teammate Dominic DeLuca (9) break up a pass to a Central Valley receiver.

GAME 7: WYOMING AREA 35, DUNMORE 14

DeLuca sparks Wyoming Area victory

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

DUNMORE – When Dominic DeLuca's play at quarterback and safety is not enough to help separate Wyoming Area from an opponent, sometimes the Warriors need a little special extra from their senior leader.

Already having a big game as a punter, DeLuca took on additional special teams duties in the return game with Wyoming Area's second straight unbeaten regular

season in jeopardy Friday night.

The move paid off in DeLuca's 79-yard kickoff return for the game-winning touchdown, sparking a 21-point burst over the final nine minutes to pull away from host Dunmore 35-14 in a non-league game between two of District 2's top small school teams.

State-ranked Wyoming Area (7-0) currently leads the race for the district's top seed in Class 3A. Defending champion Dunmore (4-3) led the

Class 2A race going into the night.

The Bucks controlled the game's first 20 minutes, scored first and came back to force a fourth-quarter tie.

On a night when Dunmore had more first downs, more yards and more time of possession, Wyoming Area needed to find another way to win the game.

DeLuca's kickoff return put the Warriors ahead to stay. He fielded a ball on the right side, made it across the field to stick

to the "return left" that was called.

"We didn't have much momentum in the beginning of the second half," DeLuca said. "I feel like that kick return changed the whole game."

After getting to the sideline by working around a block by Jayden Rusyn, DeLuca cut back inside almost to the hashmarks, worked back to the sideline, then won a footrace to the end zone.

See GAME 7 | 50

Wyoming Area 35, Dunmore 14

Wyoming Area 0 7 7 21-35
Dunmore 7 0 0 7-14

First quarter

DUN – Steve Borgia 35 run (Peyton Badyrka kick), 0:08

Second quarter

WA – Darren Rodney 2 run (Stanley Moderski kick), 0:46

Third quarter

WA – Rodney 1 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 2:57

Fourth quarter

DUN – Cristian Buckley 9 run (Badyrka kick), 9:14

WA – Dominic DeLuca 79 kickoff return (Moderski kick), 8:54

WA – DeLuca 46 run (Cumbo kick), 5:36

WA – Rodney 23 run (Moderski kick), 2:23

Team statistics	WA	DUN
First downs	121	6
Rushes-yards	29-198	44-185
Passing yards	41	77

Total yards	239	262
Passing	4-8-0	7-15-1
Sacked-yards lost	0-0	2-34
Punts-avg.	4-47.3	2-29.5
Fumbles-lost	1-0	2-1
Penalties-yards	8-73	3-33

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING – WA, DeLuca 11-94, Rodney 16-93, F.J. Braccini 1-6, Dillon Williams 1-5, DUN, Buckley 15-65, Rayshaun Dawkins 11-49, Borgia 9-32, Nick Stanco 2-22, Kameryn Reyes 4-16, Karl Kincel 1-3, Team 2-minus 2.

PASSING – WA, DeLuca 3-7-0-32; Leonardo Haros 1-1-0-9, DUN, Borgia 7-15-1-77.

RECEIVING – WA, Brian Williams 3-32, DeLuca 1-9, DUN, Buckley 2-3, Tommy Lewis 1-41, Dawkins 1-12, Stanco 1-8, Dom Temperino 1-7, Charles Valvano 1-6.

INTERCEPTIONS – WA, DeLuca 1-48, DUN, None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS – WA, None, DUN, Badyrka 28 (short).

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GAME 8: SOUTHERN COLUMBIA 42, WYOMING AREA 0

Wyoming Area dominated by Southern

By John Erzar

jerzar@timesleader.com

WEST PITTSSTON — Wyoming Area's Dominic DeLuca took the opening kickoff and dashed 51 yards down the left sideline, sending the home portion of the overflow crowd into a frenzy Friday night.

Then came a goal-line stand where the Warriors mauled Southern Columbia quarterback Preston Zachman short of the end zone. Another burst of excitement arose from the Wyoming Area fans.

The real eruption, though, hadn't taken place yet. And the other side of the stadium packed with Southern Columbia fans was about to awake from the early stunners not often seen this season.



Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area's Derek Ambrosino, right, takes down Southern Columbia running back Gaige Garcia on Friday night.

The Garcia brothers — Michigan-bound Gaige and sophomore Gavin — sparked South-

ern Columbia after a lackluster first quarter as the perennial state power Tigers went on

to dominate Wyoming Area 42-0 in a battle of state-ranked teams. Southern Colum-

bia improved to 8-0, winning its 79th consecutive regular-season game and its 40th in a row overall. The Tigers entered the game ranked atop the Class 2A state rankings. Wyoming Area, which was ranked third in the state in Class 3A, fell to 7-1.

"It's invaluable," Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said of playing Southern Columbia, which has now shut out six opponents this season. "When you're at this point of the season with what lies ahead potentially, the experience against those level athletes and that level of a program ... gives us confidence against any opponent going forward."

After finding uneven success running between the tackles,

the Tigers attacked the perimeter of the Wyoming Area defense on three drives, scoring on all of them to take a 21-0 lead at halftime.

Gavin Garcia had a 28-yard run in a six-play, 67-yard drive capped by Gaige Garcia with a 3-yard run at 11:04 of the second quarter. A 36-yard run around the right side by Gaige Garcia led to a 23-yard TD run by Gavin Garcia around the left side.

Gaige Garcia then angled from left to right on a 49-yard screen pass, making it 21-0 with 3:28 left until halftime.

"There's just a lot of good football players in the skill positions who started stepping up and making plays," Southern Columbia coach Jim

See GAME 8 | 53

Game 7

From page 42

"I'm usually the emergency guy when we need a big return or a big play, or when we have injuries," DeLuca said of his part-time role as a kick returner. "I've got to do what I've got to do sometimes."

There was still more to be done.

DeLuca's 46-yard run up the middle with 5:36 left provided an insur-

ance touchdown. His interception and 48-yard return a little more than a minute later essentially finished off the Bucks.

"Our coaching staff is constantly evaluating situations," Wyoming Area head coach Randy Spencer said. "In big games and situations, we have to use all of our resources."

"Dominic is an outstanding player. Even in the special teams game, he is explosive and can make big plays."

DeLuca finished with another wide-ranging night on the statistical charts.

As a quarterback, he carried 11 times for 94 yards and a touchdown, hit three of seven passes for 32 yards and even slipped out of the backfield for a 9-yard catch. On special teams, three of his four punts covered at least 50 yards and he finished the night averaging 47.3. Defensively, he contributed three tackles and five assists in addi-

tion to the interception.

"He's best at being a football player," Spencer said, "and we needed every aspect of it tonight."

The interception set up Darren Rodney's third touchdown, a 23-yarder.

Rodney had scored on a 2-yard run in the final minute of the half, capping a momentum-changing, 11-play, 80-yard scoring drive to send the teams to the locker room tied.

Prior to that drive,

Dunmore led 9-2 in first downs and 174-46 in total offense.

"We certainly weren't executing and Dunmore was doing a great job up front in the first half, limiting what we could do," Spencer said.

Rodney gave Wyoming Area its first lead on a 1-yard, third-quarter touchdown run that completed a 40-yard drive that consisted of seven straight runs.

The short field was the end result of a big

advantage in the kicking game behind DeLuca's punts and the returns of DeLuca and Brian Williams. Two of the punts pinned Dunmore at the 6 and 1.

The come-from-behind win was the second straight for Wyoming Area, which came from 10 down to beat Lake-Lehman 35-30 last Friday.

"We gave it all we had every play," Rodney said.

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Game 8

From page 50

Roth said. “They have a big line and lots of physical people up front, and their linebackers were doing a good job against us early.

“But we scored every time we had the ball in the first half except the first drive where we fell short and lost the ball on downs.”

Receiver Julian Fleming, who is committed to Ohio State, was the main attraction among Southern Columbia’s four players heading to Big Ten programs. The No. 3 recruit in the country had a quiet

Southern Columbia 42,
Wyoming Area 0
So. Columbia 0 21 21 0 – 42
Wyoming Area 0 0 0 0 – 0

Second quarter

SC — Gaige Garcia 3 run (Ethan Haupt kick), 11:04

SC — Gavin Garcia 23 run (Haupt kick), 6:32

SC — Gaige Garcia 49 pass from Preston Zachman (Haupt kick), 3:28

Third quarter

SC — Gavin Garcia 17 run (Haupt kick), 11:15

SC — Gavin Garcia 2 run (Haupt kick), 5:45

SC — Preston Zachman 51 interception return (Haupt kick), 4:50

Team statistics	SC	WA
First downs	16	9
Rushes-yards	28-273	30-46
Passing yards	131	96
Total yards	404	142
Passing	6-12-1	7-17-1

Sacked-yards lost 0-0 6-33
Punts-avg. 0-0 5-31.4
Fumbles-lost 0-0 0-0
Penalties-yards 1-10 4-40

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — SC, Gaige Garcia 8-70, Zachman 2-19, Gavin Garcia 7-108, Ty Roadarmel 3-59, Wes Barnes 2-0, Braden Heim 3-14, Mike Masala 2-3, Trevor Yorks 1-0. WA, Darren Rodney 5-(minus-4), Dominic DeLuca 14-18, Leo Haros 3-7, FJ Braccini 1-1, Colby Gashi 2-6, Richie Hyzinski 2-15, Vincenzo Giambra 2-5, team 2-(minus-2).

PASSING — SC, Zachman 6-12-131. WA, DeLuca 7-16-196, team 0-1-0-0. **RECEIVING** — SC, Julian Fleming 5-82, Gaige Garcia 1-49. WA, Derek Ambrosino 2-33, Brian Williams 3-26, Riley Ruzyn 2-37.

INTERCEPTIONS — SC, Zachman 1-51. WA, Williams 1-0.

MISSED FGs — WA, 45 S.

game by his standards — five catches for 82 yards and no touchdowns — but didn’t seem to mind.

“A lot of us were irritated, to be nice, when they canceled (the game) the first time,”

said Fleming, who posed for pictures with Wyoming Area fans long after the game had ended. “Soon as they brought it back, everybody was excited. We wanted to play into the second half all season



Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area's Dominic DeLuca looks to pass against Southern Columbia Friday night in a battle of state-ranked teams.

and they gave us a good run. They’re a great team, great coaches.”

Wyoming Area couldn’t do much after DeLuca opened the game with his kickoff

return. The running game was stymied throughout. The Warriors had some mild success through the air, but too often DeLuca was under a heavy pass

rush. He was sacked six times.

Southern Columbia basically ended any comeback hopes on its first two plays from scrimmage in the third quarter. After attacking the edges in the first half, the Tigers blasted through the interior of the Warriors’ defense, with a 39-yard run by Ty Roadarmel followed by a 17-yard TD burst by Gavin Garcia.

The Tigers put the final touches on the win when Zachman, who has committed to Wisconsin as a linebacker, returned a pass that hit off a Wyoming Area receiver 51 yards for a touchdown.

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GAME 9: WYOMING AREA 56, HANOVER AREA 0

Warriors cruise past Hawkeyes

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

WEST PITSTON — We now return this high school football season to its regularly scheduled programming.

Wyoming Area went back to Wyoming Valley Conference Class 3A/A Division competition Friday night and resumed running over District 2 football opponents.

One week after altering their schedule to take on a nine-time state champion, the Warriors went back to business

as usual, rolling up a 42-point halftime lead in a 56-0 senior night rout of visiting Hanover Area.

It was the fourth time this season that Wyoming Area had leads of 42-0 or greater at halftime.

The Warriors were in range of a ninth touchdown at the Hanover Area 2 with two minutes left before taking a knee on third and fourth down.

Brian Williams, Darren Rodney and Vincenzo Giambra each scored

two touchdowns and Dominic DeLuca passed for two. Two seniors who usually are responsible for blocking for their teammates also got involved in the scoring.

Derek Ambrosino's role as a tight end more often involves blocking than pass routes. But he caught three passes, including a 31-yarder for the last touchdown of the half. Sammy Solomon, who had been a fullback prior to this year, slipped behind DeLuca from his tackle position to receive

a lateral and run 10 yards for a touchdown.

The Warriors, who are closing in on the top seed for the District 2 Class 3A playoffs, improved to 8-1 by coming back strong from last week's 42-0 loss to Southern Columbia.

"In the beginning of the week in practice, we were just shaking the last game off and focusing on correcting what we did wrong in that game," Ambrosino said. "Toward the end of the week, we felt confident coming

Wyoming Area 56, Hanover Area 0
Hanover Area 0 0 0 0-0
Wyoming Area 21 21 7 7-56

First quarter

WA — Brian Williams 57 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Josh Cumbo kick), 10:32

WA — Darren Rodney 23 run (Stanley Moderski kick), 6:10

WA — BWilliams 74 punt return (Cumbo kick), 0:22.7

Second quarter

WA — Solomon 10 run (Moderski kick), 8:20

WA — Rodney 19 run (Jayden Rusyn kick), 3:21

WA — Derek Ambrosino 31 pass from DeLuca (Sydney Kruszka kick), 0:09.2

Fourth quarter

WA — Vincenzo Giambra 70 run (Kruszka kick), 11:47

WA — Giambra 22 run (Kruszka kick), 11:00

Team statistics	HA	WA
First downs	7	13
Rushes-yards	44-59	17-216

Passing yards	6	148
Total yards	65	364
Passing	1-5-0	6-10-2
Sacked-yards lost	2-30	0-0
Punts-avg.	6-21.8	0-0.0
Fumbles-lost	5-1	0-0
Penalties-yards	1-5	4-32

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — HA, Justin Stefanowicz 14-31, Connor Hummer 7-26, Hunter Karpowich 5-14, Pete Hibbard 9-11, Christian Torres 3-6, Bobby Sabecky 4-1, Team 2-minus 30. WA, Giambra 2-92, Rodney 6-79, Rich Hizynski 2-14, Solomon 2-10, DeLuca 1-9, F.J. Braccini 1-7, Dillon Williams 1-5, Blaise Sokach-Minnick 1-4, Team 2-minus 4.

PASSING — HA Torres 1-5-0-6. WA, DeLuca 5-8-1-148, Jacob Williams 1-2-1-3.

RECEIVING — HA, Camron Ceppa 1-6. WA, Ambrosino 3-85, BWilliams 2-63.

INTERCEPTIONS — HA, Tanner Bednarski 1-9, Sabecky 1-0. WA, None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS — None.

into this game."

They had reason to be.

Wyoming Area has averaged 40.9 points this season against District 2 opponents and the loss

to Southern Columbia, one of the nation's top small school teams, is its only regular-season defeat in the past two seasons.

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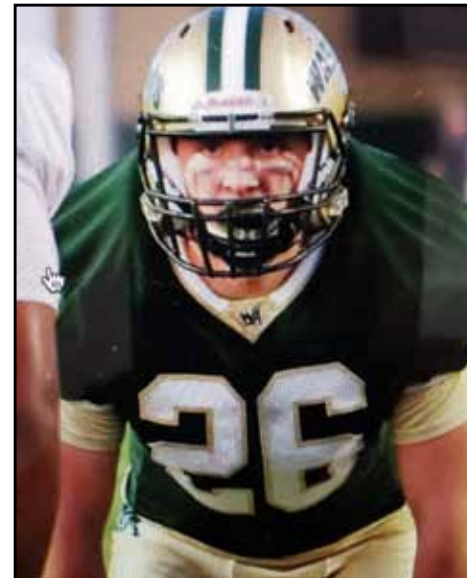


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 No. 80 Zach Sheridan
 No. 82 Michael Clark
 No. 86 Caleb Graham

No. 87 Tom Collins
 No. 88 Adam Sigman
 No. 90 & 76 Samuel Solomon
 No. 92 Stanley Moderski

No. 94 Jimmy Miller
 No. 95 Josh Cumbo
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GAME 10: WYOMING AREA 45, PITTSTON AREA 0

Record-setting shutout for Warriors

By Tom Robinson
For Times Leader

WEST PITTSTON
— The play call was the exact same, but the position on the field made it look entirely different.

Derek Ambrosino caught one “bootleg pass left” from Dominic DeLuca and headed off on a lengthy sprint. On another, he had to get his feet down in the back of the end zone while he was catching the ball.

Both plays resulted in touchdowns, covering 96 and 14 yards, as Wyoming Area got all but two of its points in the first half of a 45-0 romp that is the biggest blowout in the 55-game

Wyoming Area 45, Pittston Area 0
Pittston Area 0 0 0 0-0
Wyoming Area 2221 2 0-45

First quarter

WA — Darren Rodney 21 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 8:16

WA — Dominic DeLuca 1 run (Stanley Moderski kick), 3:30

WA — Derek Ambrosino 96 pass from DeLuca (Rodney run), 0:14.7

Second quarter

WA — DeLuca 42 run (Cumbo kick), 7:35

WA — Rodney 5 run (Moderski kick), 4:56

WA — Ambrosino 14 pass from DeLuca (Jayden Rusyn kick), 1:12

Third quarter

WA — Safety (Rusyn forced fumble out back of end zone), 9:22

Team statistics	PA	WA
First downs	7	20
Rushes-yards	22-61	44-337
Passing yards	66	142
Total yards	118	479

Passing 6-18-0 4-11-0
Sacked-yards lost 1-2 0-0
Punts-avg. 5-30.8 0-0-0
Fumbles-lost 3-0 1-1
Penalties-yards 5-41 8-78

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — PA, Bryheem Patterson 9-40, Franny George 3-18, Dylan Lukachko 5-15, Anthony Thomas 1-minus 2, P.J. Pisano 3-minus 5, Mike Nocito 1-minus 5. WA, Rodney 15-135, DeLuca 8-92, Vicenzo Giambra 11-60, Rich Hinzynski 3-27, F.J. Braccini 1-10, Zajquay Williamson 2-6, Nico Sciandra 2-3, James Miller 1-2, Leo Haros 1-2.

PASSING — PA, Nocito 5-13-0-61, Pisano 1-4-0-5, Patterson 0-1-0-0. WA, DeLuca 4-9-0-142, Blaise Sokach-Minnick 0-2-0-0.

RECEIVING — PA, Andrew Krawczyk 2-62, George 2-0, Patterson 1-6, Lukachko 1-minus 2. WA, Ambrosino 2-110, Brian Williams 2-32.

INTERCEPTIONS — None.
MISSED FIELD GOALS — None.

history of its rivalry with Pittston Area.

DeLuca also joined Darren Rodney in running for two touchdowns.

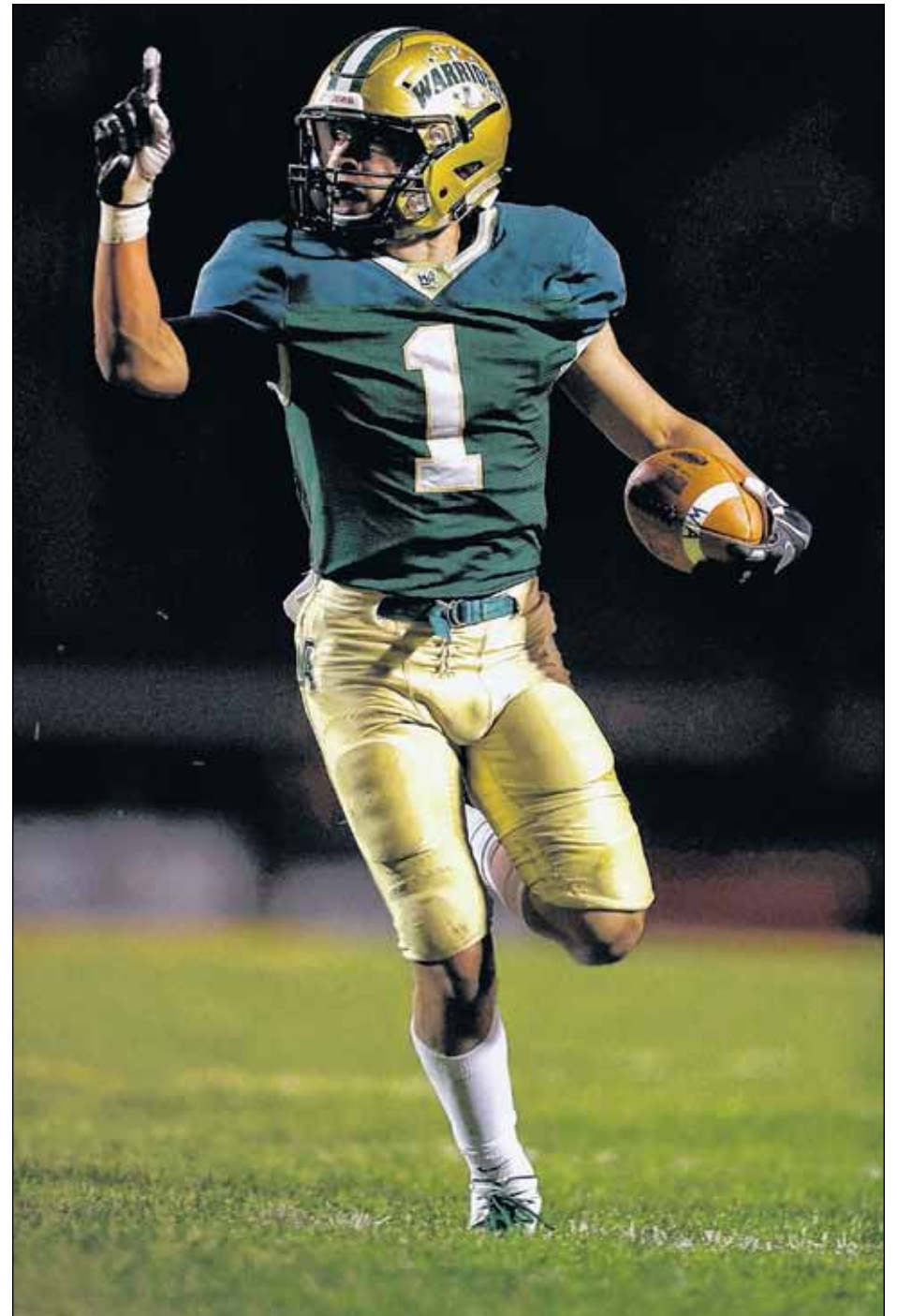
By accounting for four of the scores and returning a punt 36 yards to set one of those up, DeLuca

See GAME 10 | 58



Wyoming Area tight end Derek Ambrosino heads for the end zone after pulling in a pass against Pittston Area in the first quarter on Friday.

Fred Adams | For Times Leader



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area running back Darren Rodney celebrates as he crosses the goal line for the first Wyoming Area touchdown of many on Friday night.

Game 10

From page 57

earned the 42nd annual Carmelo Falcone Award as the Most Valuable Player in the rivalry

game.

After making Wyoming Area 6-for-6 in scoring touchdowns while gaining 382 yards and churning out 15 first downs in six first-half possessions, DeLuca, Ambrosino and

Rodney were all done for the night offensively at halftime.

With the entire second half played under the mercy rule, the Warriors held the Patriots to two second-half yards, leav-

ing Ambrosino debating which was his favorite part of the night.

"The 96-yard touchdown *and* the fact we shut out Pittston two years in a row," Ambrosino said. "That's the best

part of tonight's win."

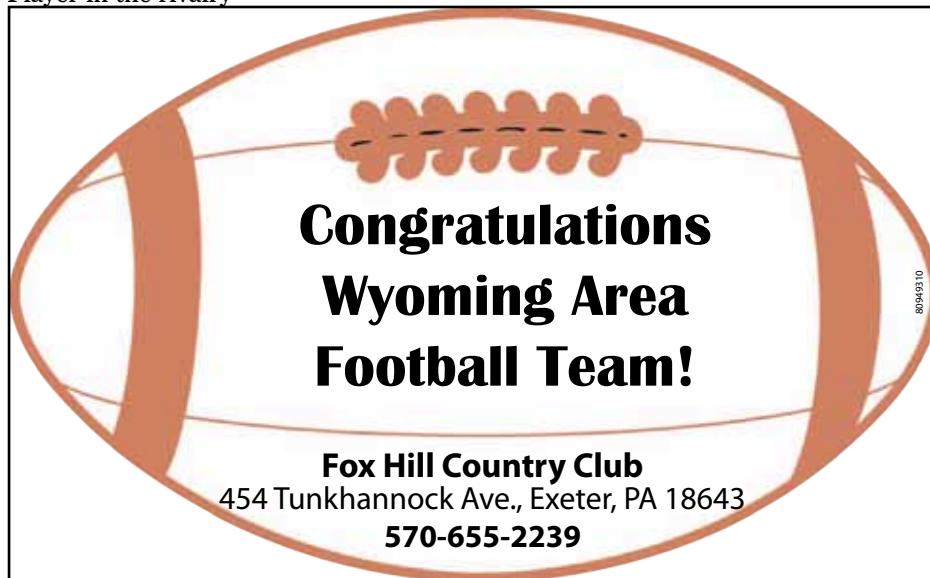
Last year's 40-0 shut-out had been the largest margin of victory in the series.

The Warriors topped that while completing a 9-1 regular season and

earning a week off with a bye as the top seed in the District 2 Class 3A playoffs.

DeLuca went home with an individual trophy

See GAME 10 | 59



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Game 10

From page 58
after hitting four of nine passes for 142 yards and turning his eight carries

into 92 more yards. “It’s a great honor,” DeLuca said. “... It’s a big award to achieve, and to follow in that legacy is great.”

DeLuca delivered his longest touchdown

pass from the end zone when he floated a deep ball to Ambrosino, who had broken free behind the defense. Ambrosino completed the play in the other end zone after holding off a late Pittston

Area chase on a sprint to the end zone.

“Dom hit me with a perfect ball there in stride,” Ambrosino said. “... I had to bring out the after-burners there around the 30 or 20 yard

line.”

The touchdown gave Wyoming Area a 22-0 lead after one quarter.

A different skill set was on display while pushing the lead to 43 points with 1:12 left in the half.

“He’s a 6-4 tight end on a 5-8 corner,” DeLuca said of the overhead catch in tight quarters. “He’s going to use his size and make a play.”

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GAME 11: WYOMING AREA 48, LAKE-LEHMAN 12

Warriors roll into championship game

By John Erzar

jerzar@timesleader.com

WEST PITTSTON — Just when Lake-Lehman finally worked its way back into Friday night's District 2 Class 3A semi-final game, Wyoming Area senior Dominic DeLuca struck like he has throughout his career.

DeLuca fetched the ensuing kickoff at the 18-yard line that got by everyone. He turned, dashed down the left sideline and scored.

And like that, Wyoming Area was back in control and on its way to a 48-12 victory, sending the Warriors to a district championship game for the first time since winning it all in 2012.

Wyoming Area (10-1) will host four-time defending D2-3A champion Scranton Prep (9-2) for the title next Friday night. Prep defeated Western Wayne 30-14 in the other semifinal and lost 34-0 to Wyoming Area in Week 2.

"We were very motivated coming into this week coming off of last year's disappointing loss in the semifinals," Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. "To get to the district championship and get the opportunity to play on our home field is a great opportunity for us."

Lehman ended its season at 8-4.



Wyoming Area running back Darren Rodney breaks through a hole to carry the ball inside the Lake-Lehman 1-yard line in the second quarter Friday.

Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area dominated from the onset, going on scoring drives of 52, 70 and 72 yards on its first three possessions. Running back Darren Rodney, who finished with a game-high 154 yards on 23 carries, capped the Warriors' first possession with a 2-yard run. DeLuca ended the second with a 10-yard TD pass to 295-pound

Sam Solomon on a tackle-eligible play. A 1-yard run by DeLuca made it 21-0 with 7:33 left until halftime.

Up to that point, Wyoming Area had run 29 plays to six by Lehman. The Black Knights, though, showed some life on their next possession.

Helped by 40 yards in Wyoming Area penalties, Lehman cut the deficit to

21-6 on a 1-yard plunge by quarterback Ethan Adams.

Lehman's momentum ended 13 seconds later when DeLuca returned a kickoff for TD for the second time this season and the third time in his career.

"I wasn't expecting any kicks at all to me today when I was back there," DeLuca said. "But that

one got to me on the squib kick and I took it to the house. We got great blocks up front. That's what helped."

Lehman coach Jerry Gilsky agreed the return drained the Black Knights' momentum.

"It really deflated us," Gilsky said.

The final play of the first half might have sapped it completely.

"I thought we had a score here at the end (of the half)," Gilsky continued. "I don't know what the hell happened. We'll see it on film. It really hurts you. You take that scenario and score at the end, it's a different ball game. It is what it is."

Adams survived four sacks on Lehman's final

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Game 11

From page 58

possession of the first half, including three in a row where Drew Mruk,

Caleb Graham and Solomon got to him to set up a fourth-and-22 from the Wyoming Area 32-yard line. Adams threw over the middle to tight end Danny Kutz, who fought to get into the end zone.

But after the officiating crew conferred, Kutz was ruled short of the goal line as the team went into the locker room.

Touchdown runs by Rodney and Leo Haros late in the third quarter

put the game out of reach at 42-6.

Adams was 18 of 27 for 158 yards. Unlike the first meeting where he threw TD passes of 66 and 52 yards, he had to settle for short gains for the most

part. He was also sacked six times compared to once when Wyoming Area defeated the Black Knights 35-30 in Week 2.

Lehman's running game was shut down completely. The Black

Knights finished with 68 yards on 26 carries, but most came when the game was turned over to the reserves. When the starters were on the field, they managed 13 yards on 16 rushes.



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to Coach Randy Spencer and the 2019 Wyoming Area Warrior Football Team. PIAA AAA State Champions!



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District 2 Class 3A Semifinals – Wyoming Area 48, Lake-Lehman 12

Lake-Lehman 0 6 0 6 – 12
Wyoming Area 6 22 14 6 – 48

First quarter

WA – Darren Rodney 2 run (kick blocked), 7:52

Second quarter

WA – Sam Solomon 10 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Rodney run), 11:03

WA – DeLuca 1 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 7:33

LL – Ethan Adams 1 run (bad snap), 4:16

WA – DeLucca 82 kick return (Stanley Moderski kick), 4:03

Third quarter

WA – Rodney 4 run (Cumbo kick), 3:26

WA – Leo Haros 14 run (Moderski kick), 0:13

Fourth quarter

WA – Vincenzo Giambra 76 run (kick failed), 6:26

LL – Jeremy Scouton 5 run (run failed), 1:33

Team statistics	LL	WA
First downs	17	16

Rushes-yards	26-68	41-364
Passing yards	158	32
Total yards	226	386
Passing	18-27-0	2-5-0
Sacked-yards lost	6-29	0-0
Punts-avg.	3-31	0-0
Fumbles-lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties-yards	6-37	11-100

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING – Lehman, Zack Kojadinovich 5-28, Adams 9-(minus-18), Ryan Eiden 2-5, Scouton 7-35, Jacob Monko 3-18, Wyoming Area, Rodney 23-154, DeLuca 11-100, Derek Ambrosino 1-3, Haros 3-25, Giambra 2-75, Richie Hyzinski 1-7.

PASSING – Lehman, Adams 18-27-0-158, Wyoming Area, DeLuca 2-5-0-32.

RECEIVING – Lehman, Eiden 4-45, Danny Kutz 4-43, Casey Kaminski 8-68, Kojadinovich 2-2.

Wyoming Area, Brian Williams 1-22, Solomon 1-10.

INTERCEPTIONS – none.

MISSED FGs – none.

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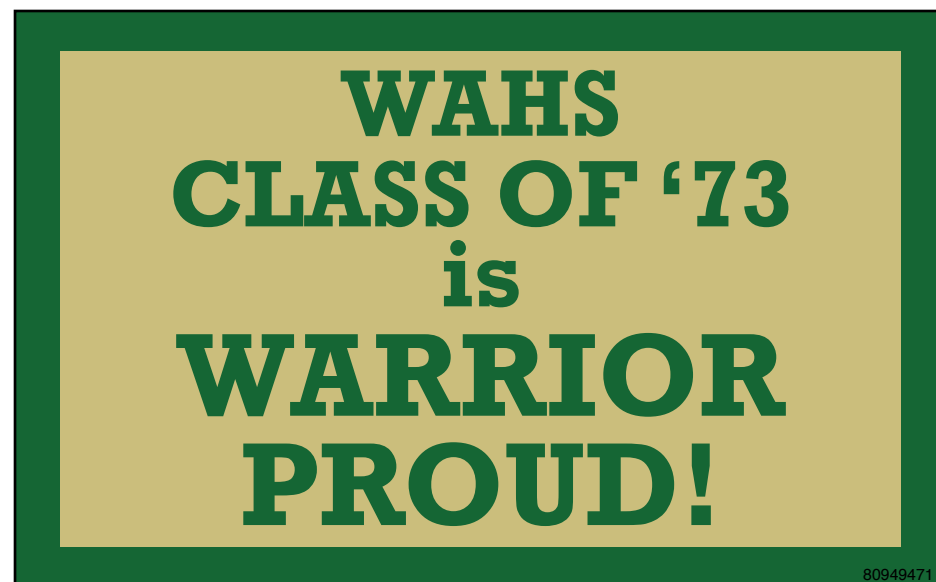
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So proud to have been part of this District, as President of Board when this Team and this Coach brought our District and our State, the Pride that these young men so richly deserved. God bless them all as they go on to succeed in whatever they do.

(Remember, Market Analysis is always free, just call.)

“We were talking coming out at half. We faced adversity throughout the course of the year — Lehman, Dunmore, Montoursville. It was about this is our last 24 minutes, let’s make it the best 24 minutes of the season. To have our kids come out and show that heart and show that desire to compete at the highest level was just incredible.”

Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer
on the second-half comeback in the title game



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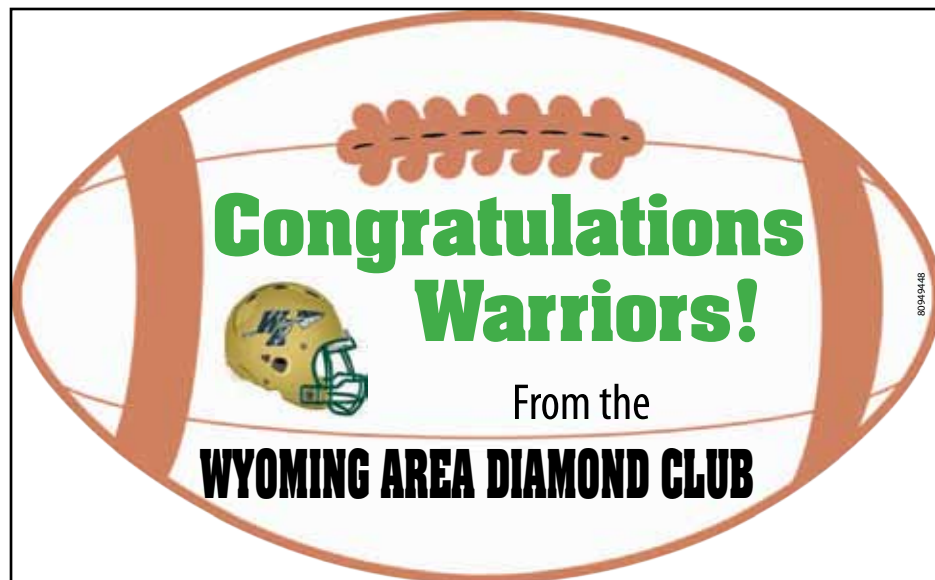
“We all thought we could make a big run to states, but Coach Pace, who we all thought was crazy during summer practices, kept saying, ‘This is for the state championship; we’re training for the state championship.’ We all thought that was crazy and we’ll never make it there, but we made it there and we won and it was a shocker.”

Quarterback Dominic DeLuca



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GAME 12: WYOMING AREA 27, SCRANTON PREP 0



Wyoming Area wide receiver Brian Williams (6) looks for a pass interference call on Scranton Prep's Paddy Grady as the official throws the flag in the District 2 Class 3A championship game in West Pittston on Friday night.

Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

DeLuca runs for 162 yards as Wyoming Area runs D2 title

By Paul Sokoloski

psokoloski@timesleader.com

WEST PITSTON — An emotional Dominic DeLuca couldn't keep from thinking back to the losses.

The loss of star running back Corey Mruk.

The seven-point loss to Lakeland in last year's district

semifinals.

The only loss of this year, against powerful Southern Columbia.

In the end, they all led to Wyoming Area's biggest win.

DeLuca ran for 162 yards and two touchdowns Friday, Leo Haros intercepted a last-gasp scoring attempt and added the game's final

touchdown and the Warriors trampled four-time defending champion Scranton Prep 27-0 to win the District 2 Class 3A football championship at Wyoming Area's football field.

"We've been waiting forever for this," DeLuca said.

It was Wyoming Area's first District 2 title since 2012 and first at the Class 3A level,

where the Warriors were moved when the PIAA went to a six-classification high school system from four a few years ago. And it sent Wyoming Area into next week's PIAA playoffs against District 4 champion Montoursville in a battle of 11-1 teams.

"Last year, we came up short," DeLuca said. "We

worked out butts off the whole offseason.

"We came back with a mission."

That resolve was tested early as Prep opened the game by marching right down the field.

Paddy Grady hit a 15-yard pass on the first play, running back Tucker Johnson went for

See GAME 12 | 72

Congratulations Warriors! 🏈



Derek,
Congratulations to you and your teammates on winning the PIAA Class AAA State Championship. We are so proud of your accomplishments on and off of the field. Cherish the memories of your senior football season —we certainly will!

*Love,
Pop, Gram, Dad, Mom and Nathan*

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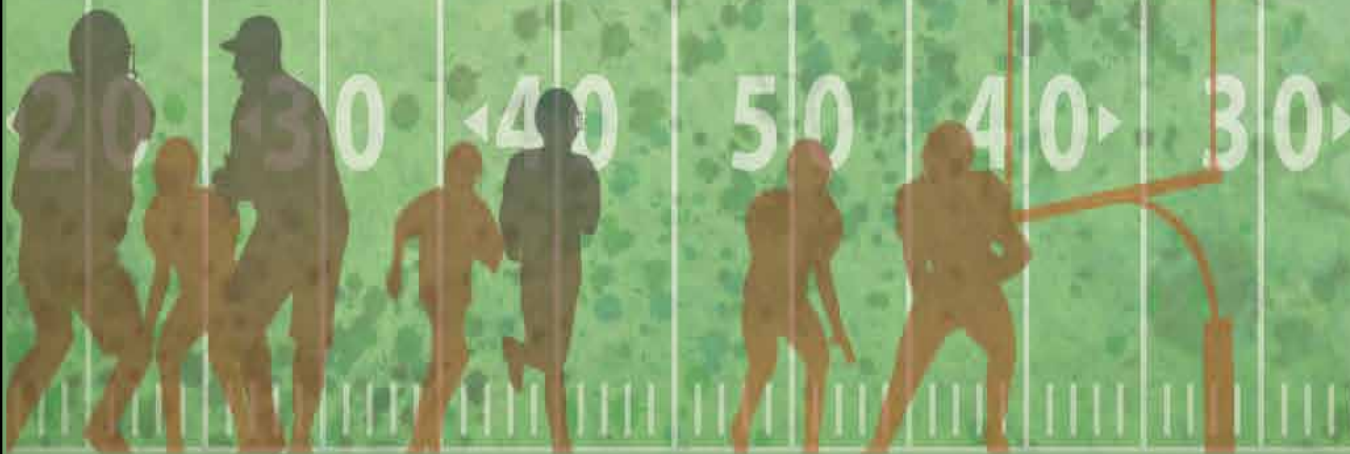
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Game 12

From page 69

17 and 24 yards on the next two and the Cavaliers stormed 80 yards in six play and a penalty.

The seventh turned into a backbreaker, though.

Led by 295-pound lineman Sammy Solomon, the Warriors defense stuffed Prep on a fourth-and-1 play three yards from the end zone and turned the ball over to Wyoming Area's offense.

Prep regained possession at the Wyoming Area 26-yard line on a punt, but went backwards from there on two penalties and three incompletions.

"I couldn't be more proud," Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. "Prep came out strong early. We had a big goal line stand on the first drive, then were able to turn it around. We look at that Southern Columbia game, that gave us an opportunity to improve ourselves."

It was DeLuca who turned the whole district title game around.

He scored on a 1-yard touchdown sneak to give the Warriors a 7-0 lead midway through the second quarter, and it looked like the score was about to stay that way as the teams readied to head into halftime.

But there were still a few seconds on the clock when Wyoming Area fielded a punt at mid-field — plenty enough time for the Warriors

District 2 Class 3A Championship Wyoming Area 27, Scranton Prep 0	
Scranton Prep	0 0 0 0—0
Wyoming Area	0 14 7 6—27
First quarter	
No scoring	
Second quarter	
WA —	Dominic DeLuca 1 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 7:22
WA —	DeLuca 50 run (Cumbo kick), 0:00.8
Third quarter	
WA —	Derek Ambrosino 28 pass from DeLuca (Cumbo kick), 8:06
Fourth quarter	
WA —	Leo Haros 1 run (Conversion pass int.) scoring play
Team statistics	
SP	WA
First downs	10 14
Rushes-yards	19-112 3 9 - 210
Passing yards	99 74
Total yards	211 284
Passing	10-22-3 4-10-1
Sacked-yards lost	2-9 1-9
Punts-avg.	4-30.3 5-33
Fumbles-lost	2-0 1-0
Penalties-yards	6-46 12-103
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS	
RUSHING — PREP, Tucker Johnson 5-57, Ryan McAndrew 6-25, Carter Odell 1-16, Paddy Grady 5-13, London Montgomery 2-1. WA, Dominic DeLuca 21-162, Dillon Williams 9-38, Leo Haros 3-7, Darren Rodney 5-4, TEAM 1- (minus 1).	
PASSING — PREP, Grady 10-22-3-99, WA, DeLuca 3-9-1-61, Jacob Williams 1-1-0-13.	
RECEIVING — PREP, Robert Rossi 4-55, Breandan Colleran 3-31, McAndrew 2-16, Odell 1- (minus 3). WA, Derek Ambrosino 1-28, Haros 1-28, DeLuca 1-13, Riley Rusyn 1-5.	
INTERCEPTIONS — WA, Jacob Williams 1-13, Brian Williams 1-5, Leo Harris 1-0.	
MISSED FGs — None.	

star quarterback to work some late-half magic.

DeLuca took a shotgun snap and headed straight over center, and didn't stop until he zigged and zagged his way to a 50-yard touchdown with eight-tenths of a second still on the clock, giving Wyoming Area a two-touchdown lead at the break.

"It was just to get the ball moving," DeLuca said of the game-changing quarterback draw. "I got the downfield blocks, which helped a lot, and made one cut."

Suddenly, Prep couldn't stop the bleeding.

DeLuca carried five



Wyoming Area running back Dillon Williams (43) gets up after a first down against Scranton Prep in the District 2 Class 3A championship game in West Pittston on Friday night. Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

times for 34 yards as Wyoming Area came out of intermission with a 62-yard touchdown march, capped when he faked another draw, stopped short and tossed an easy 28-yard touchdown pass to Derek Ambrosino for a 21-0 Warriors lead.

"Dom DeLuca does what Dom DeLuca does all year," Spencer said. "Big-time playmaker."

The plays were just starting for Wyoming Area.

Jacob Williams and Brian Williams both

pulled down the first of three interceptions by Wyoming Area defensive backs. And fullback Dillon Williams took a direct snap and found DeLuca for an apparent 14-yard touchdown pass on a trick play early in the fourth quarter.

"I do whatever they need me to," shrugged DeLuca, who earlier caught a 13-yard pass from Jacob Williams after a lateral to the wide receiver.

That tricky fourth-quarter play was called back by penalty, nullify-

ing the apparent touchdown but it proved no big deal to DeLuca.

He promptly hit Haros for 28 yards to the Prep 1-yard line, then Haros romped into the end zone on a 1-yard dive to set the final score.

"Dom is a great leader," Haros said. "He really pushes us, makes sure we know about what we're doing."

The Warriors knew they had just one mission left, to complete the shutout.

And Haros sealed it with a leaping, one-hand-

ed interception in the back of the end zone with just over a minute to play. He also sealed Wyoming Area's celebration.

"That was the biggest play I've ever had in a football game in my life," Haros said. "Locking down on defense was pretty good. I got to come out with my family and do what I love. It was just the keys I had to read, knowing what I had to do. Our secondary did a good job of coming up.

"Biggest step of my life."



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Congratulations, Wyoming Area

GAME 13: WYOMING AREA 43, MONTOURSVILLE 27

Wyoming Area moves to state semifinals for first time

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

WILLIAMSPORT — Wyoming Area's offense spun off in a different direction for the first time in the postseason and so did the football program for the first time in school history.

Quarterback Dominic DeLuca threw for a season-high 310 yards and four touchdowns as Wyoming Area defeated Montoursville 43-27 Saturday afternoon in a PIAA Class 3A quarterfinal game at Williamsport High School.

Wyoming Area (12-1) won its first state playoff game against a non-District 2 team in four tries in its history (the D2-3A title game is considered a state first-round). The Warriors will play D11 champion Tamaqua (12-2) in the semifinals.

"We've been there

three times prior and this is the first one," Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. "I know the district championships are considered a state game, but as far as a legit state game this is it. This is history for us today and the kids did a great job."

Wyoming Area moved to a state semifinal game for the first time by throwing the ball, quite a change from its two D2-3A wins. In those two games, DeLuca attempted just 14 passes, completing five for 93 yards and a touchdown.

On Saturday, DeLuca obliterated those numbers with an 11 of 19 performance.

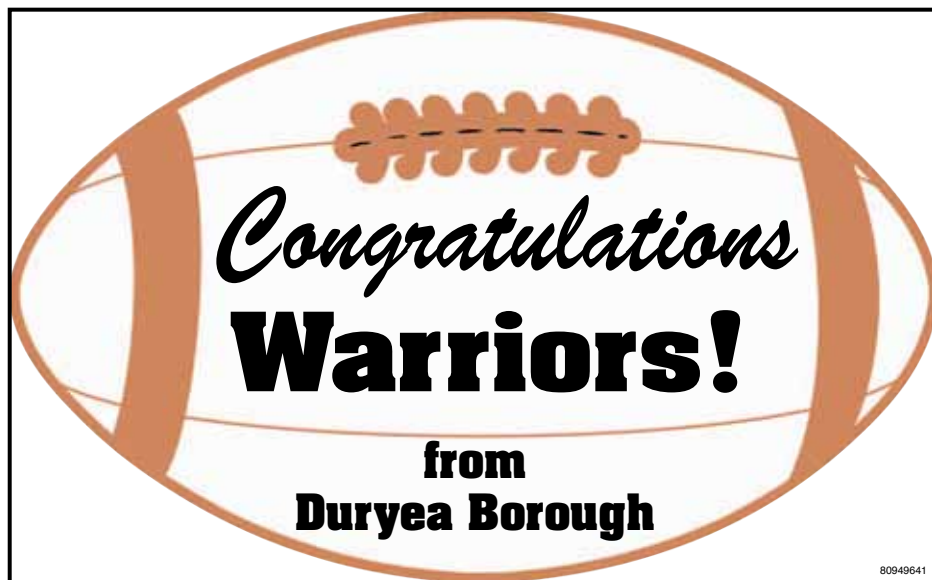
DeLuca thought his arm may be used more with running back Darren Rodney in street clothes due to an injury.

See GAME 13 | 75



Wyoming Area's F.J. Braccini runs the ball against Montoursville in a PIAA Class 3A quarterfinal game at STA Stadium on Saturday.

Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader



PIAA Class 3A Quarterfinals Wyoming Area 43, Montoursville 27

Wyoming Area 7 6 1614 — 43
Montoursville 0 21 0 6 — 27

First quarter

WA — Leo Haros 33 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Stanley Moderski kick), 5:47

Second quarter

MON — Rocco Piluzzi 27 run (Ian Blankenhorn kick), 11:52

MON — Calogero Signor 1 run (Blankenhorn kick), 7:49

WA — Brian Williams 7 pass from DeLuca (kick blocked), 0:40

MON — Jaxon Dalena 4 pass from Hunter Shearer (Blankenhorn kick), 0:03

Third quarter

WA — B.Williams 72 pass from DeLuca (Ambrosino from DeLuca), 10:04

WA — Haros 5 run (Riley Rusyn run), 4:42

Fourth quarter

MON — Piluzzi 3 run (run failed), 10:46

WA — B.Williams 29 pass from DeLuca (Moderski kick), 5:09

WA — DeLuca 2 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 2:11

Team statistics	WA	MON
First downs	14	22
Rushes-yards	29-95	38-141
Passing yards	310	160
Total yards	405	301
Passing	11-19-1	16-29-0
Sacked-yards lost	1-11	3-14
Punts-avg.	3-29.3	3-26.7
Fumbles-lost	0-0	5-2
Penalties-yards	7-65	6-38

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Wyo. Area, Haros 9-42, DeLuca 18-46, Dillon Williams 2-7. Montoursville, Pulizzi 15-76, Shearer 7-(minus-4), Dylan Moll 1-3, Logan Ott 8-46, Jake Reeder 4-19, Signor 2-13, team

1-(minus-2).

PASSING — Wyo. Area, DeLuca 11-19-1-310. Montoursville, Shearer 16-29-0-160.

RECEIVING — Wyo. Area, B.Williams 5-191, Haros 1-33, Derek Ambrosino 1-3, FJ Braccini 1-9, Rusyn 1-41, Caleb Graham 2-33. Montoursville, Moll 1-8, Dillon Young 5-66, Dalena 7-57, Cameron Wood 1-3, Ott 2-26.

INTERCEPTIONS — Montoursville, Dalena 1-0.

MISSED FGs — none.

Game 13

From page 74

Rodney was a game-day decision, and Spencer believes he will be back next weekend.

“I did expect it,” DeLuca said, “but I also expected to run the ball. The running game wasn’t hitting for us, so we had to go to the air.”

DeLuca went to his favorite target, receiver Brian Williams, five times for 191 yards that included a 29-yard TD pass with 5:09 to play to put Wyoming Area ahead 36-27.

“We came into the week and I was coming off an ankle injury and wasn’t sure if I was going to play or not,” Williams said. “Being a big factor for my team today means a lot to me. This is our first state playoff game win actually in the program’s history.

“It means a lot to us, especially our coach.”

Despite running back Leo Haros and Williams hauling in touchdown

passes in the first half, Wyoming Area went into the locker room trailing 21-13. More was working for D4 champion Montoursville, which used the final 40 seconds of the second quarter to score a go-ahead touchdown.

Things changed dramatically early in the third quarter. Montoursville went three-and-out with the second-half kickoff and on Wyoming Area’s first play of the third quarter DeLuca hit Williams on a short out pattern. Williams turned upfield and raced 72 yards for a touchdown as Wyoming Area tied the score 21-21.

Wyoming Area then forced another punt and on its first play, DeLuca connected with wideout Riley Rusyn on a 41-yard fly pattern down the right sideline.

“I feel like they were more in the box and waiting for us to come downhill at them,” DeLuca said. “All that play action killed them.”

Haros scored from 5 yards out four plays



Wyoming Area wide receiver Brian Williams catches a 7-yard touchdown pass against Montoursville in a PIAA Class 3A quarterfinal game at STA Stadium in Williamsport on Saturday. Bill Tarutis | For Times Leader

later and Rusyn turned a botched extra-point snap into a two-point conversion run, giving Wyoming Area a 29-21 lead.

Montoursville answered with a 15-play scoring drive and running back Rocco Piluzzi’s 3-yard TD run cut the

deficit to 29-27 with 10:46 left in the fourth quarter. A two-run point conversion run by Piluzzi ended up a yard short with Wyoming Area defensive tackle Nick Elko applying the final hit.

That was the last Mon-

toursville’s offense made any noise as Wyoming Area’s defense took control.

Wyoming Area defensive end Derek Ambrosino blindsided quarterback Hunter Shearer on Montoursville’s next possession. Shearer coughed

up the ball right to linebacker FJ Braccini. The turnover led to Wyoming Area’s final points on a 2-yard run by DeLuca with 2:11 remaining.

Wyoming Area ended up outscoring Montoursville 30-6 in the second half.

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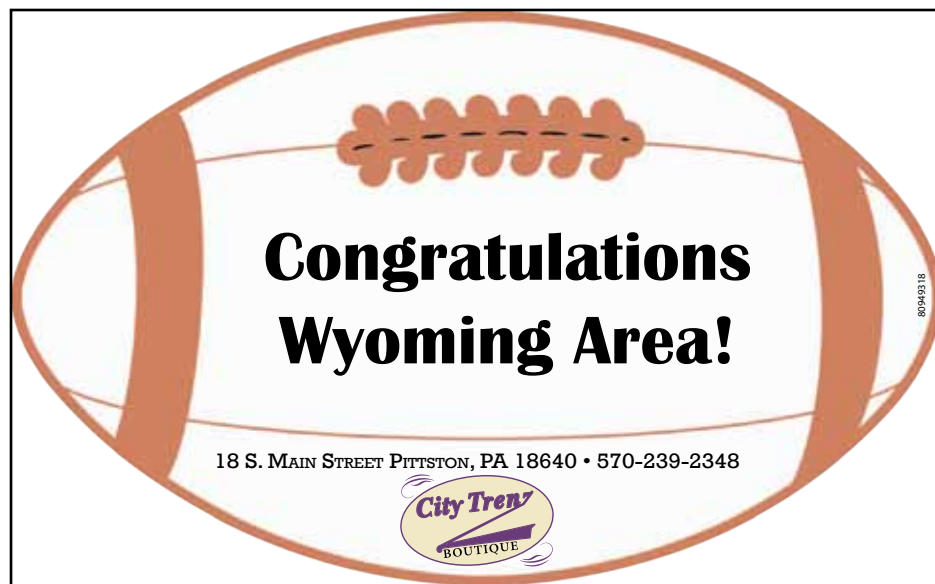
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GAME 14: WYOMING AREA 21, TAMAQUA 0

Defense leads to sweet victory

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

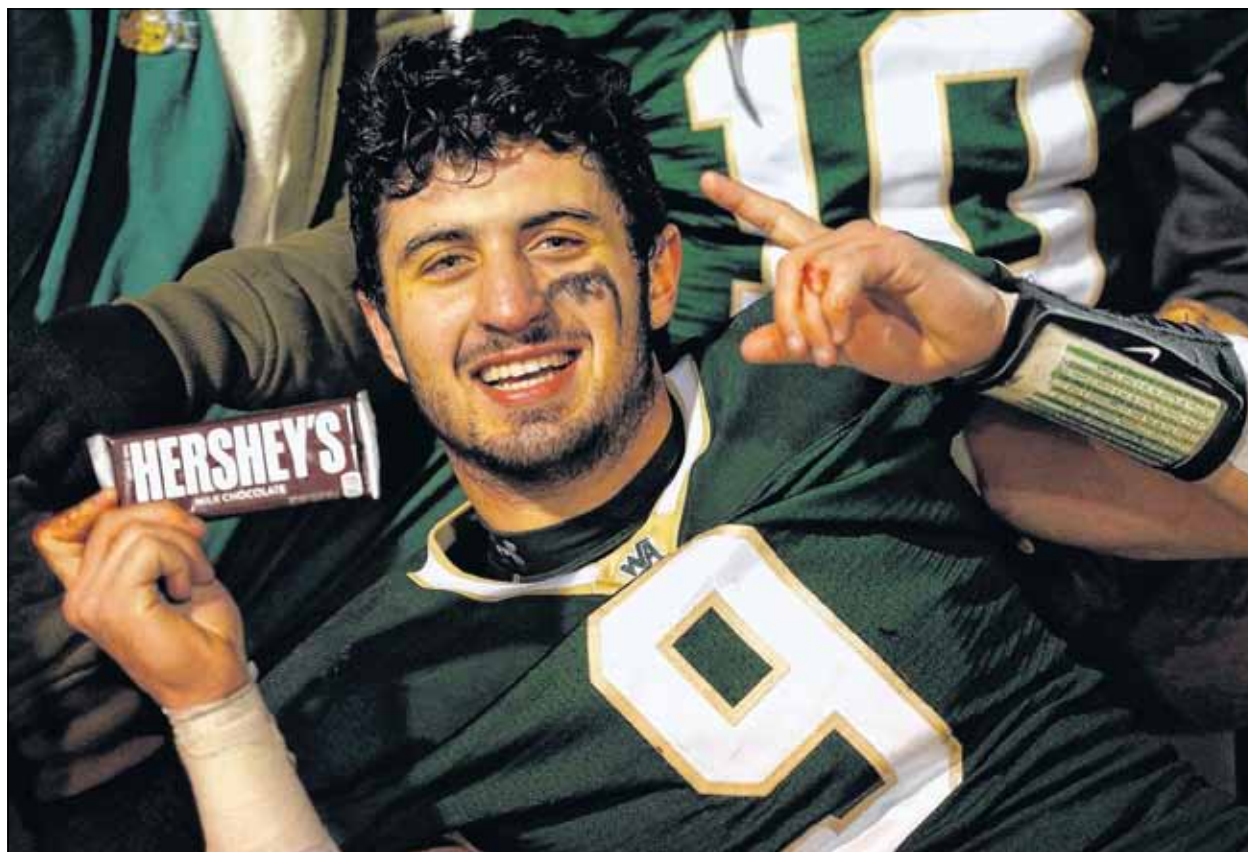
KINGSTON — The offense started the road to Hershey early Friday night. The defense made sure things never veered off course.

Wyoming Area scored on its first two possessions and the defense picked off five passes as the Warriors defeated Tamaqua 21-0 to advance to the PIAA Class 3A state championship game.

District 2 champion Wyoming Area (13-1) will play D7 champion Central Valley (13-1) at noon Saturday, Dec. 7, at Hersheypark Stadium for the championship. Central Valley defeated D6 champion Bald Eagle Area 45-0 in the other semifinal.

Not only will Wyoming Area be playing for its first state football championship, it's the first time in school history a team in any sport advanced to a state championship game based on available PIAA records.

"It's just incredible, historic for our program to play for a state championship," said Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer, who was also a player and assistant coach for the Warriors. "As great as that is and as big as that is, we've been talking all year with this



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area quarterback Dominic DeLuca holds a Hershey bar after a 21-0 victory against Tamaqua in a PIAA Class 3A state semifinal game Friday night at Spartan Stadium in Kingston.



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area quarterback Dominic DeLuca tries to jump out of the grasp of Tamaqua linebacker Nate Boyle in the first quarter of Friday night's PIAA Class 3A semifinal game at Spartan Stadium in Kingston.

group about just playing one more together."

The offense overcame a couple penalties in its first possession to finish off an eight-play, 82-yard drive with a 5-yard TD run by quarterback Dominic DeLuca. The score was set up with a 41-yard DeLuca to Brian Williams pass that placed the ball at the Tamaqua 8-yard line.

Running back Darren Rodney, who missed the quarterfinal win vs. Montoursville with an injury, carried five consecutive

plays on the Warriors' next possession. DeLuca ended it by dropping a pass over a defender and to Brian Williams in the left corner of the end zone for a 27-yard touchdown.

Rodney finished with 133 yards on 23 carries.

"Last week, we didn't want anything bad to happen so I sat out," said Rodney, who was scratched from the lineup the morning of the Montoursville game. "Going into this week I felt great. I knew I could

PIAA CLASS 3A SEMIFINALS

Wyoming Area 21, Tamaqua 0
Tamaqua 0 0 0 0 - 0
Wyoming Area 7 7 7 0 - 21

First quarter

WA — Dominic DeLuca 5 run (Josh Cumbo kick), 4:54

Second quarter

WA — Brian Williams 27 pass from DeLuca (Stanley Moderski kick), 8:24

Third quarter

WA — Darren Rodney 1 run (Moderski kick), 6:18

Team statistics	TAM	WA
First downs	16	13
Rushes-yards	21-62	40-171
Passing yards	217	76
Total yards	279	247
Passing	20-48-5	3-6-0
Sacked-yards lost	1-9	1-9
Punts-avg.	1-35	4-28
Fumbles-lost	0-0	2-2
Penalties-yards	6-47	11-101

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Tamaqua, Nate Boyle 16-55, Matt Kistler 2-8, Brayden Knoblauch 3-(minus-1). Wyoming Area, Darren Rodney 23-133, DeLuca 14-44, Dillon Williams 2-8, team 3-(minus-6).

PASSING — Tamaqua, Knoblauch 19-47-5-199, Boyle 1-1-0-18. Wyoming Area, DeLuca 3-6-0-76.

RECEIVING — Tamaqua, Lucas Gregoire 3-51, Boyle 10-72, Kistler 6-76, Knoblauch 1-18. Wyoming Area, Leo Haros 1-8, B.Williams 2-68.

INTERCEPTIONS — Jake Williams 3-23, B.Williams 1-0, DeLuca 1-18.

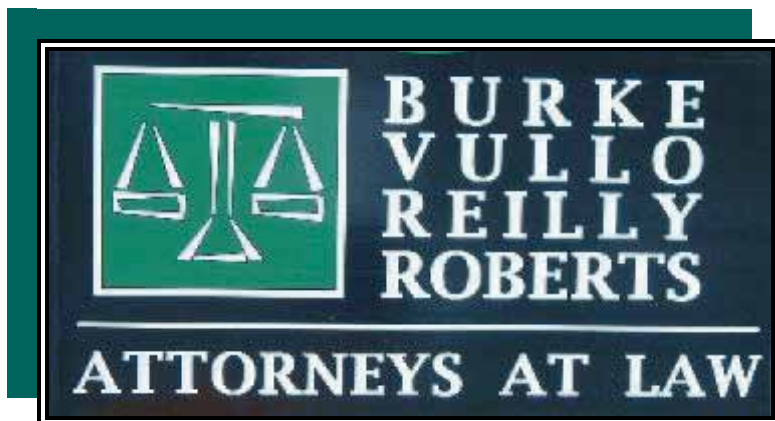
MISSED FGs — none.

do it."

Wyoming Area scored just once more — on a 1-yard run by Rodney midway through the third quarter — but the way the defense was playing it was just added insurance.

D11 champion Tamaqua (12-3) came into the game with the school's all-time leading rusher, passer and receiver. Running back Nate Boyle was unable to get the running attack going, so the Blue Raiders turned to quarterback

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Game 14

From page 79

Brayden Knoblauch.

Knoblauch was sacked just once but harassed and flushed from the pocket several times by defensive ends Derek Ambrosino and Caleb Graham. He often had to throw on the run or off balance, and the Wyoming Area secondary responded.

Defensive back Jake Williams recorded the first of his three interceptions with a minute left until halftime. His pick in the end zone stopped a Blue Raiders' drive that moved to the Wyoming Area 12-yard line. Jake Williams grabbed his second interception on Tamaqua's first possession of the second half after fellow defensive back Leo Haros slapped a pass away from a receiver.

"It helps a ton," Jake Williams said of the pass rush. "For the quarterback to get forced into rushing a throw or forced into something, it's great. It helps us down field to make plays. We wouldn't be here without those guys up front."

Knoblauch attempted 47 passes — the most he's ever thrown in a game — but completed just 19 for 199 yards.

The final three Tamaqua drives ended in interceptions. Brian Williams, Jake's older brother, nabbed Wyoming Area's third pick of the game, again with pressure forcing a throw. DeLuca made it four interceptions just past the midway point of the fourth quarter.

Jake Williams then completed his interception hat trick as Knoblauch was chased from the pocket and floated a desperation pass to near the goal line.

Dallas also made the Class 4A championship game, marking the first time two Wyoming Valley Conference teams will play for state football titles in the same year. Berwick is 1997 was the last WVC team in a state championship.



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Wyoming Area players wave Hershey bars after defeating Tamaqua 21-0 Friday night to advance to the PIAA Class 3A state championship game.



Wyoming Area running back Darren Rodney picks up a first down in the second quarter as Tamaqua defensive end Jared Reed makes the tackle.

Fred Adams | For Times Leader

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GAME 15: WYOMING AREA 21, CENTRAL VALLEY 14

Wyoming Area rallies to win Class 3A championship

By John Erzar
jerzar@timesleader.com

HERSHEY — Down 14 points and down to the final quarter of the season.

A quarterback with two aching knees from a vicious hit.

A defense that couldn't corral the opposition's star running back with any consistency.

It all changed in a flash and a dash Saturday afternoon.

Senior receiver Riley Rusyn's 80-yard touchdown catch on a pass not intended for him provided the ignition for Wyoming Area's 21-14 comeback victory against Central Valley in the PIAA Class 3A state championship game at Hersheypark Stadium.

The championship was the first team state title in school history even though Wyoming Area (14-1) appeared headed for defeat.

Then came the play that changed everything.

Faced with a third-and-8 on the second play of the fourth quarter, Wyoming Area quarterback Dominic DeLuca stepped up to avoid two pass rushers and then fired 20 yards down the center of the field to tight end Derek Ambrosino.

Rusyn raced in front of Ambrosino, made the catch on the run and then sped down the right



F.J. Braccini (36) talks to his teammates prior to the game starting.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader



Derek Ambrosino runs after a short catch as lineman Nick Elko leads the way.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

sideline for a touchdown.

"Dom was getting pressured so I had to roll back to him," said Rusyn, who had just six receptions entering the game but most were for long yardage. "I guess he was throwing the ball to Derek, but I just undercut it."

The outcome was the same as a successful hook-and-lateral play without the initial catch and pitch. It caught Central Valley's secondary flatfooted as three defenders converged on Ambrosino. Another

Central Valley defensive back made a valiant effort to sprint across the field to tackle Rusyn, who was unsure he was going to make it to the end zone.

"Not until I turned my head and realized no one was there," Rusyn said. "But when I hit about the 15, I started to gas out."

Rusyn had just enough fuel to fight off a tackle attempt at the 2-yard line.

DeLuca had enough to finish the game, although things looked bleak near the midway point of the

second quarter. DeLuca took a nasty hit to his right kneecap on a running play and laid on the field in pain.

"I got drilled right in the kneecap," DeLuca said. "I tweaked both knees, but it was the right knee that was the one."

DeLuca limped through the remainder of the game, but able to throw one more TD passes and run for the eventually game-winner.

After Rusyn's TD, Wyoming Area tackled Central Valley running back Jaylen Guy a yard short on a fourth-and-2 play from the Wyoming Area 48-yard line. It was a rare stop of Guy, who finished with 164 yards on 30 carries.

Five plays later, DeLuca connected with receiver Brian Williams to place the ball at the Central Valley 8-yard line. Three plays netted just 4 yards and Wyoming Area faced a fourth-and-goal.

DeLuca rolled right while Ambrosino sneaked off the line to the left side of the end zone. Ambrosino's catch and Josh Cumbo's extra point tied the score 14-14 at 4:20 of the fourth quarter.

"That was huge. That was the game. If we didn't get that, our season is over," Ambrosino

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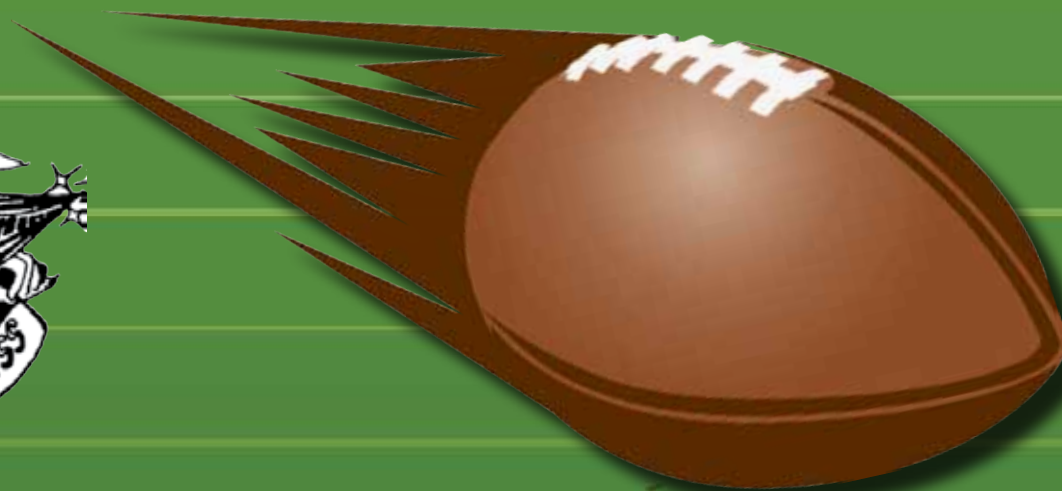
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Game 15

From page 81

said. “I faked like I was blocking the middle linebacker and then I slipped off and caught it in the corner of the end zone.”

Central Valley responded by moving to midfield once again, but Wyoming Area defensive end Caleb Graham batted down a third-down pass to force a punt. The punt got caught up in a relentless end-to-end wind and netted just 8 yards. An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty gave Wyoming Area the ball at the Central Valley 42 with 1:43 to play.

After DeLuca ran for 2 yards on first down, he connected with Williams for a 39-yard gain on second down to move to the Central Valley 1. He plowed in from there with the eventual winning TD with 41 seconds left.

Then it was the Wyoming Area defense’s turn to come up big as Central Valley moved to its 46-yard line with under 20 seconds left. But Graham knocked down a pass on third-and-inches.

On fourth down, Central Valley receiver Jawon Hall took a step behind the line of scrimmage and caught a short pass. Wyoming Area freshman linebacker Drew Mruk, playing the spot his older brother Corey manned until a season-ending injury, nailed Hall before he could take a step.

Cornerback Leo Haros applied the final hit to drive Hall out of bounds.

Game over ... except for a kneel down.

“I not so sure we made

PIAA Class 3A Championship
Wyoming Area 21, Central Valley 14
Central Valley 0 7 7 0 — 14
Wyoming Area 0 0 0 21 — 21
Second quarter

CV — Jaylen Guy 1 run (Ethan Ott kick), 1:25

Third quarter

CV — Stephon Hall 2 run (Ott kick), 9:40

Fourth quarter

WA — Riley Rusyn 80 pass from Dominic DeLuca (Stanley Moderski kick), 11:39

WA — Derek Ambrosino 4 pass from DeLuca (Josh Cumbo kick), 4:02

WA — DeLuca 1 run (Moderski kick), 0:41

Team statistics	CV	WA
First downs	13	11
Rushes-yards	41-154	32-58
Passing yards	93	209
Total yards	247	267
Passing	8-16-1	11-16-1
Sacked-yards lost	3-20	3-18
Punts-avg.	4-23.5	4-25
Fumbles-lost	2-0	3-0
Penalties-yards	7-62	7-65

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Central Valley, Ameer Dudley 7-(minus-29), Guy 30-164, Myles Walker 2-10, S.Hall 2-9. Wyoming Area, Darren Rodney 12-34, DeLuca 17-19, Brian Williams 0-4, Leo Haros 2-2, team 1-(minus-1).

PASSING — Central Valley, Dudley 8-16-1-93, Wyoming Area, DeLuca 11-15-0-209, Jake Williams 0-1-1-0.

RECEIVING — Central Valley, Jawon Hall 4-34, Guy 2-23, Walker 2-36. Wyoming Area, B.Williams 3-70, Ambrosino 4-33, Haros 1-0, Rusyn 3-106.

INTERCEPTIONS — Central Valley, Mike Barbuto 1-0. Wyoming Area, DeLuca 1-0.

MISSED FGs — none.

enough plays,” said Central Valley coach Mark Lyons, whose District 7 championship team finished 13-2. “They made the plays when they counted. In a game like this, those plays get magnified.”

Wyoming Area brought a state title back to the Wyoming Valley Conference for the first time since Berwick won the Class 3A championship in 1997. District 2 had lost seven consecutive championship games, including Dallas’ setback on Thursday night.

“We were talking coming out at half,” Wyoming Area coach Randy Spencer said. “We faced adversity throughout the course of the year



Wyoming Area receiver Brian Williams hauls in a 32-yard reception over Central Valley defensive back Stephon Hall to place the ball at the Central Valley 8-yard line in the fourth quarter.

Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

— Lehman, Dunmore, Montoursville. It was about this is our last 24

minutes, let’s make it the best 24 minutes of the season.

“To have our kids come out and show that heart and show that

desire to compete at the highest level was just incredible.”

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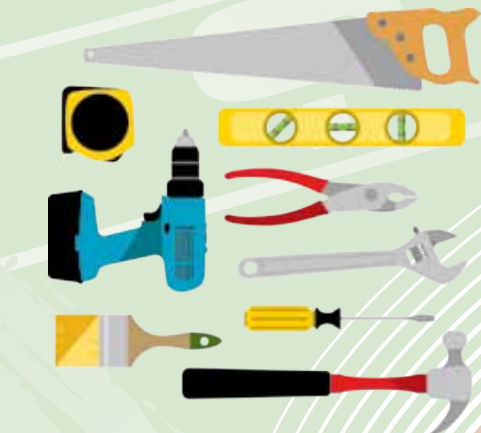
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