

Breakaway Back



Michael Ferrara Scores Three Touchdowns as Valhalla Defeats Visiting Edgemont 21-7 Under the Bright Lights on Saturday Evening

Panthers Overcome Penalties in Shutout Win Over Ardsley

By Andrew Vitelli

Coming off what coach Tony Becerra called his team's biggest win of the season, the Pleasantville Panthers entered halftime Saturday at risk of a letdown loss. Even after 24 minutes of stifling defense and a strong running game, the Panthers found themselves up just 3-0 in the battle between schools with the same nickname, in large part because of penalties.

"It seemed every time we got a big play off, it would come back for a penalty," Becerra said. "I challenged the guys at halftime to make it a tale of two halves."

Pleasantville did just that, scoring 28 unanswered points in the second half in a 31-0 road win that for much of the game felt closer than the final score indicated. The Panthers improved to 5-0 on the season with their second straight shutout.

It was a defensive play that got things started for Pleasantville, as safety Ryan Drillock intercepted quarterback Julian McGarvey on Ardsley's first offensive play following a Pleasantville punt early in the third quarter. Starting at midfield, Pleasantville quarterback Jack Howe led the Panthers down the field with his arms and his legs. Howe capped the drive

with a 13-yard touchdown run down the left sideline on a keeper play that gave Pleasantville a 10-0 lead with 3:20 left in the third quarter.

One of the changes Becerra made in the second half was to task junior Declan McDermott with kickoffs. McDermott's kicks were not especially deep, but had an unpredictable backspin that Ardsley couldn't figure out. Ardsley didn't field a kickoff cleanly the entire half, and following Howe's score Pleasantville senior Doug Crocitto recovered the kick on the 23-yard line before anyone on Ardsley could get to the ball.

This time, it was junior Charlie McPhee who led the Panthers into the end zone. After taking Pleasantville to the 6-yard line on a 17-yard reception, McPhee, after a P'ville penalty, scored on an 11-yard run to give the Panthers, following the extra point, a 17-0 lead as the third quarter drew to a close. After having what Becerra described as a breakout game the week before against Nanuet, McPhee led Pleasantville with 136 yards on 17 carries.

"It was a little slippery out there, but I felt good," McPhee said. "The line did a fantastic job blocking, and I just ran hard

right up the middle."

Pleasantville added two scores in the fourth quarter on touchdown runs by Ian Esliker, who carried 11 times for 67 yards, and Nick Salzarulo. Howe threw for 67 yards and added 47 yards on the ground.

The first points of the game didn't come until the final seconds of the first half. In a drive beginning at its own 29-yard line, Pleasantville drove to the Ardsley 10-yard line. Howe's 27-yard field goal just barely cleared the uprights with 16.4 seconds remaining in the half.

Both teams had their share of missed opportunities in the first two quarters. Pleasantville failed to score on its opening drive for the first time all season, turning the ball over on downs after a fake punt attempt was foiled.

"I didn't want that to end," Becerra said of his team's first-possession scoring streak. "So we took a chance there. But I wouldn't have confidence to call something like that if I didn't think our defense would be up to it."

Ardsley would be next to miss an opportunity, as kicker Henry Bretts had his field goal attempt blocked by Brian Reda. Howe nearly connected with Reda on a long touchdown pass, but officials ruled that he failed to control the ball before coming down out of bounds. After penalties forced Pleasantville into a fourth-and-30 situation, the Panthers

were forced to punt. It was one of several promising drives that stalled for the Panthers, who were penalized a total of 84 yards before halftime.

"It was a little frustrating, but we couldn't let it get to our head," McPhee said. "We had to keep playing our game and keep going and not let it get to us."

Pleasantville was not alone in committing costly penalties. Ardsley appeared to have scored first late in the opening quarter after a scrambling McGarvey connected for what looked like a 91-yard touchdown pass. The play was called back after officials ruled that McGarvey had crossed the line of scrimmage before getting rid of the football. A long McGarvey run was also called back due to holding, and Ardsley was forced to punt.

For Pleasantville, Saturday's win over Ardsley (2-3) followed the team's most impressive win of the season, a 34-0 win at Nanuet. This week, Pleasantville faces Yonkers Montessori Academy (1-4) Friday night at home. Though the Panthers face their toughest challenge of the regular season when they host Westlake the following week, Becerra said Pleasantville would not be looking past YMA.

"You can't take that for granted," he said. "High school football games are not easy to win, regardless of the opponent."



Junior running back Charlie McPhee



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Ferrara's Three Touchdowns Lift the Vikings Past Edgemont

By Andy Jacobs

Valhalla junior Michael Ferrara's return from a one-game absence could not have begun much worse than it did on Saturday night.

The Vikings' speedy back dropped the football on a punt return not even 90 seconds after the opening kickoff. He recovered it, but then lost five yards on a pitchout on first down. One play later, he fumbled the ball, giving visiting Edgemont possession in Valhalla territory.

"Yeah, really bad," Ferrara would concede later about his early troubles. "I got upset with myself. I knew I couldn't put my head down. So I just went back out there and tried harder."

Fortunately for the Vikings, Ferrara quickly put his slow start behind him.



Valhalla's Michael Ferrara carries the football in Saturday night's win over Edgemont.



Joseph Pecora returns a kick in Valhalla's 21-7 win over visiting Edgemont.

Just a minute after fumbling the ball away, he got it back by intercepting a pass. By the end of the evening, he had completely atoned for the shaky first couple of minutes by scoring three long touchdowns and carrying Valhalla to a 21-7 victory over the Panthers.

"I think he wanted to make plays so badly since he didn't play last week," said Vikings coach Stephen Boyer afterwards. "I think he just got a little too pumped up and too hyped up."

The Vikings, now 4-1, were locked in a scoreless battle with Edgemont until the final seconds of the second quarter. A Ralph Gonzalez 29-yard touchdown pass to Ferrara with five minutes left in the half had been nullified by a penalty. So when Valhalla took possession at its own 32-yard line 73 seconds before intermission, it seemed likely the teams would start the third quarter still waiting to get on the board.

But on a third-and-nine play, Ferrara caught a screen pass, broke a tackle and found clear sailing down the left sideline. His 55-yard touchdown catch, and Anthony DiMicelli's point-after kick, gave the Vikings a 7-0 lead with 19 seconds left on the clock.

"I wasn't expecting a long play," said Ferrara, who was cleared to return earlier in the week after suffering concussion-like symptoms in the loss to Westlake. "I just ran my route. I caught it, no one was there, so I just ran."

"The whole first half, we put ourselves backwards," said Boyer. "But Michael's a player, and Michael can score at any time on the field. You throw to your playmaker and obviously he caught the ball. Instead of getting tackled at the 40, he spins out and makes a play. And I think that was a little bit of momentum we carried into the second half."



Valhalla quarterback Ralph Gonzalez throws a pass in the 21-7 home victory over the Panthers.



The Vikings' Erick Pasqualone picks up big yardage in the second half of Saturday's game.

Still, Edgemont was able to move the ball 60 yards in eight plays on its first possession of the third quarter. But the drive stalled at the Vikings' 20-yard line and Will Funk missed a 37-yard field goal. Valhalla wasted a 39-yard run by Erick Pasqualone on first down and soon the teams were heading to the fourth quarter with the Vikings still clinging to their 7-0 lead.

Less than a minute into the final period, on first down, Ferrara took a handoff, got to the left sideline and outran everyone 86 yards for a touchdown that gave the Vikings some breathing room. The PAT by DiMicelli left Edgemont trailing by 14 points.

But the Panthers roared right back, going 60 yards on eight plays and scoring a touchdown as quarterback Frankie Sayegh ran six yards to pay dirt with 7:57 left in the game. With the point-after kick by Funk, the Valhalla lead was sliced in half.

Any thought of a Panther comeback quickly ended when Ferrara, who finished the night with 143 yards on the ground on 14 carries, romped 47 yards for his third touchdown with 4:10 remaining on the clock.

"It wasn't working in the first half," said Ferrara about the Vikings' ground game. "But we switched things around and they worked out in the second half. We got things going."

Edgemont, taking advantage of a penalty

on the Vikings for excessive celebrating following a quarterback sack, marched the ball from its own 34-yard line in the waning minutes all the way to the Valhalla 3-yard line. But on fourth down and less than two minutes to go, a rollout pass by Sayegh to Meshack Ngowi wound up harmlessly bouncing on the turf.

The Vikings took over and soon ran out the clock, sending Edgemont to its second straight loss after starting the season with three successive wins.

"We made a couple adjustments in the second half and I think it helped out," said Boyer. "We didn't have the ball that much, but we scored twice. Give the kids credit. I said, 'Sometimes you don't play well, but good teams win. Two years ago, we don't win this game.' So the program has come a long way."



Valhalla linemen Jason Smith (51) and Javaun Johnson sack Edgemont quarterback Frankie Sayegh in the fourth quarter.



Jesi Oswald of Westlake pursues the ball in Thursday's game against visiting Pleasantville.



Fox Lane's Elaina Bruck lines up a backhand return during her match at second singles vs. Greeley on Wednesday afternoon.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Briarcliff's Teresa Marinaccio finds room to run as she controls the ball in Thursday's home game vs. Putnam Valley.



Westlake's Giuliana Piazza dribbles the ball up the field in the Wildcats' home game vs. Pleasantville last Thursday.



Briarcliff's Hanna Feuer wins a race for the ball in last week's home game vs. the Putnam Valley Tigers.



Horace Greeley second-singles player Chloe Zilkha follows through on a backhand in last week's match vs. Fox Lane.



Greeley's Carly Levitz gets ready to hit a forehand during her match at first singles vs. Fox Lane last Wednesday.



Taylor Cutroneo of Fox Lane smacks a forehand return in her first-singles match last Wednesday at Greeley High School.



Hannah Orce of Briarcliff moves the ball across the field in last Thursday's game against Putnam Valley.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Pleasantville goalie Kristie Guttridge concentrates as she makes a save during Thursday's game at Westlake.

Pleasantville's Catherine Kauber (left) battles with Westlake's Amber Lulanaj in last Thursday's game at Westlake High School.

Nicole Desimone of Westlake settles the ball in the Wildcats' home game vs. Pleasantville.



Pleasantville's Kate Stargiotti gets set to send a free kick down the field vs. host Westlake in last week's game.

Amelia Tomson of Fox Lane has some company as she tries to advance the ball in the Foxes' 2-1 win over the Admirals last week.

Bridgit Connors of Fox Lane hits the ball up the field in the Foxes' road victory over the Arlington Admirals last Tuesday afternoon.



Pleasantville's Erin Egan controls the ball in front of Westlake's Mia Malandrucolo and teammate Bianca Balducci during last Thursday's game.



Fox Lane goalie Grace Kiernan is congratulated by teammate Jojo Campbell following the Foxes' 2-1 win over Arlington last week.



Anisha Chandy of Pleasantville prepares to hit a backhand return in her match at second singles on Thursday.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS



Kathryn Graham of Greeley moves toward the ball in the first half of Saturday's home field hockey game.



Pleasantville's Olivia Ashton lines up a forehand during her win at first singles vs. Valhalla on Thursday afternoon.

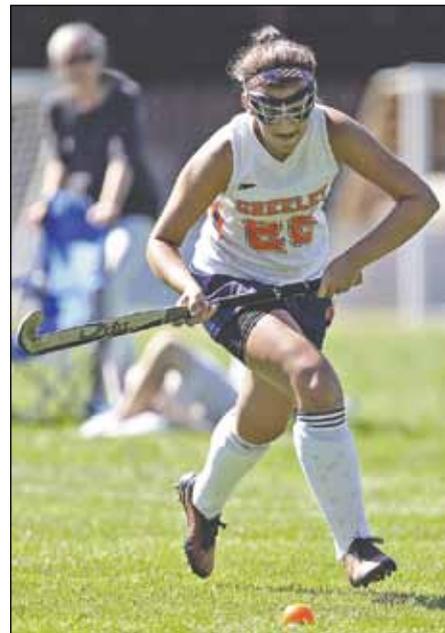


Briarcliff freshman Rachel Lim drills a forehand return during her match at first singles against visiting Hastings.

SPORTS SCENE



Greeley's Fiona Grant hits the ball up the field during the Quakers' home game vs. Scarsdale.



Lauren Neff of Greeley chases the ball in the early moments of the second half of Saturday's game vs. Scarsdale.



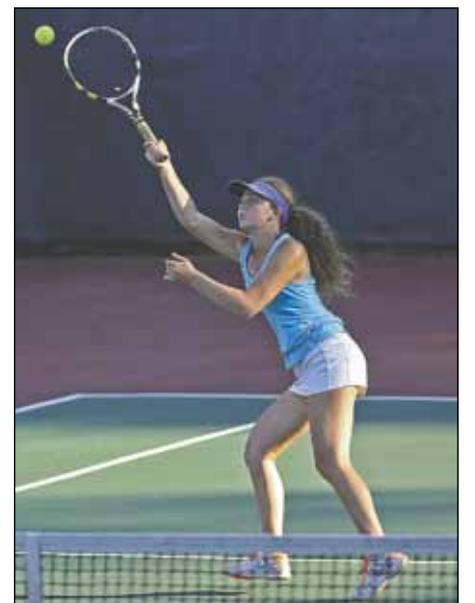
Loren Haukova of Briarcliff moves forward to hit a forehand in her second-singles match vs. Hastings.



Horace Greeley's Nikki Potter controls the ball in Saturday's home game vs. Scarsdale.



Pleasantville's Madison Jacobs hits a backhand in her singles match vs. Valhalla on Thursday.



Briarcliff's Maxine Zaretsky reaches to hit a forehand volley during her singles match against the Hastings Yellow Jackets.



ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

Fox Lane quarterback Jacob Payson throws a pass in Friday night's game at John Jay.



Westlake running back Joseph Ferri breaks some tackles in the Wildcats' lopsided win over visiting Nanuet on Saturday afternoon.



Fox Lane senior Gabe Orta catches a touchdown pass in the first half of Friday night's game vs. John Jay.

focus on WEEK FIVE FOOTBALL



Horace Greeley's Matt Jabloner tries to catch a deflected pass over the middle in the Quakers' home game vs. the Port Chester Rams.



Daniel Grossman of Westlake carries the ball in the second half of the Wildcats' home win on Saturday over the Golden Knights.



James McGetrick runs with the football after making a catch near midfield in Saturday's Greeley home loss to Port Chester.



Wyatt Singer of Fox Lane tries to outrun the John Jay defense in Friday's game, won by the host Patriots.



Fox Lane's Seth Sullo runs with the football in the Foxes' road game vs. the John Jay Patriots.



Greeley quarterback Ryan Flanagan searches for an open receiver in Saturday afternoon's game vs. Port Chester.

BRIARCLIFF'S DYNAMIC DUO



**Freshman
Rebecca Lim**



**Senior
Loren Haukova**

ANDY JACOBS PHOTO