

## FOOTBALL: YORK 14, WILLOWBROOK 10

## Brian Filosa's punt return TD rallies York to victory

By SCOTT SCHMID  
editorial@mysurbanlife.com

VILLA PARK - Trailing Willowbrook late in the third quarter Oct. 15, York was in need of a spark.

The Dukers ended up finding an unlikely hero.

Brian Filosa's punt return for a touchdown turned out to be the game-winning score in York's 14-10 victory in the West Suburban Conference crossover in Villa Park.

The junior caught the punt at his own 35-yard line, found a seam up the middle and then cut to the Dukers' sideline on his way to the end zone.

"The blockers made a lane for me," Filosa said, "and I ran through it. The blockers made it easy for me. This was an important win. This season's been really fun. Winning is fun."

York (7-1) has been doing a lot of winning, aside from last week when the Dukers saw a 16-point fourth-quarter lead evaporate in a heart-breaking 27-23 loss to Hinsdale Central.

The visitors found themselves in a similar situation Oct. 15 with the Warriors inside York territory twice in the final stages. But the York defense, which

has allowed just 71 points on the season, held firm, forcing one turnover on downs before Matt Sutter picked off a pass with under a minute remaining.

"It was similar to last week, nearly identical," said senior defensive end Everett Snyder, who notched a sack in the fourth quarter. "I heard guys on the sideline saying we have to respond and we did. It was perfect. I couldn't be happier. And we had a lot of guys contribute."

"This was huge. Coming off that loss last week, obviously we wanted to go undefeated, but building momentum going into the playoffs is huge for us. We have some of the best coaching in the state, I honestly believe that. Our defensive coordinator is amazing. We have trust in the game plans and it's paying off."

The Dukers' first touchdown came on a 2-yard run by Mark Schneider early in the second quarter. Schneider finished with 50 yards on 13 carries. Kelly Watson rushed for 61 yards on 13 attempts, and



Brian Filosa

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Mike Fitzgerald, York football coach

quarterback Matt Vezza ran for 120 yards.

York ends the regular season with a home game against Oak Park-River Forest and would grab a share of the Silver title with a win and a Glenbard West victory over Hinsdale Central.

"That was fitting to kind of have the exact same situation [as last week]," York coach Mike Fitzgerald said. "We were able to come out with those stops at the end. Finding ways to win is the mark of a good team. Willowbrook's a great program and they know how to win these types of games, too. So that was definitely a big win for us."

"And I think Brian [Filosa] embodies a lot of what this team is about. We have a lot of talent on this team and we have a lot of guys who might not be playing as much as they would want. But they've stayed positive and worked hard in practice and right there, he was ready for that opportunity when it came. He embodies the team first attitude of this group."

Willowbrook (5-3) took a 3-0 lead on the opening possession of the game with a 35-yard field goal by Adrian Guerrero. After the visitors went ahead, the Warriors went back on top with a 3-yard touchdown run from Evan Stubblefield shortly before halftime.

Filling in for an injured Josh Brown, Jaylon White rushed for 101 yards on 16 carries and Nick Mabutas caught seven passes for 60 yards.

Despite the loss, Willowbrook clinched the West Suburban Gold title and automatic playoff bid courtesy of Downers Grove South's win over Morton.

"I thought our guys played really hard and I thought their guys played really hard," Willowbrook coach Nick Hildreth said. "There was just some stuff we left out there. We've got to clean some stuff up."

## FOOTBALL: GLENBARD WEST 35, LYONS TOWNSHIP 3

## Glenbard West takes command in second half, defeats Lyons Township

By BILL STONE  
editorial@mysurbanlife.com

LA GRANGE - The Glenbard West football team was explosive Oct. 15 at Lyons Township as junior Joey Pope had a 46-yard touchdown run on just the second play from scrimmage.

Then the Hilltoppers simply were impressive.

"I think we played the best second half of our careers," senior linebacker Pat Shadid said after the Hilltoppers' 35-3 West Suburban Conference Silver victory.

"I believe we're really coming together and just going 1-0 every week. I really loved our defense today. That's the best we've ever played all year together as a team. And our offense got it together in the end. We're playing a tough four quarters of football."

Glenbard West (7-1, 4-1 Silver) took command behind three touchdowns on three possessions in the third quarter after leading only 7-3 at halftime. Pope scored the first three touchdowns en route to breaking 1,000 rushing yards on the season while the defense allowed just 70 net yards in the second half.

The Hilltoppers can earn a share of the Silver title if they can beat spring conference champion Hinsdale Central (7-1, 5-0) in the regular-season finale Oct. 23 in Glen Ellyn.

"Our eyes are not on the conference title. Our eyes are on winning at home," Shadid said. "Last time we were at home we lost to York (12-10) and that really hit us hard and that was a wake-up call. Our prize is tradition and never losing back to back at home because we've never done that under [coach] Chad Hetlet."

Pope rushed 16 times for 170 yards and also was the recipient of 80 of quarterback Corey Tai's 99 passing yards.

With another great defensive effort, the Hilltoppers have allowed just 65 points all season.

"It was Glenbard West football. We played really good defense. Our offense just kept moving the chains and then we had some big plays," Hetlet said.



Pat Shadid

"I was really excited about how we played. Last week, we turned the ball over, had a ton of penalties. The week before, same thing. You can't beat a team that's solid if you do those things, and we didn't do those things in the second half. It's a big step for us, even though it's Week 8. We're still growing."

Pope increased his scoring total to 17 touchdowns this season, 13 of them rushing. Pope needed 118 rushing yards Oct. 15 to reach 1,000 for the season.

"I didn't even know that. That's great to hear, but I don't care too much about accolades for myself. I just want to win as a team," Pope said.

"That was the best half of football we've ever played. It was nice to have a dominating win against a good team like LT. It's a good feeling for our team."

The defense set up the second-half scoring on Egan Foley's interception return to the Lyons' 43. Pope bounced off a tackler and turned a short-yardage gain for first down into a 35-yard TD run.

Tai found Pope for a 43-yard TD pass and then scored on a 26-yard run after Pope converted a fourth-and-1 run.

Jack Oberhofer, a linebacker like Shadid, scored on a 21-yard run in the fourth quarter, dragging the last defender with him into the end zone.

About the only setback was Pope being helped off the field in the fourth quarter after an 18-yard gain.

"Just cramped up. Both calves. It was pretty rough," Pope said.

The Lions (4-4, 2-3) need to win their regular-season finale at Downers Grove North to be in contention for their first playoff berth since 2017.

"We just need to put together two good halves," Lyons senior defensive back and tri-captain Owen Cherry said. "I think in the position we're in, we can't want it more than we want it now. A good week of practice, get back at it, fix some stuff."

Lyons all-conference quarterback Joey Antonietti, a senior, moved to running back and receiver in Week 6 and alternated between the three positions Oct. 15. On his first snap at quarterback in the first quarter, he had a 65-yard run to the 31 and the drive advanced to the 13 after a fourth-down personal foul penalty. David Waight kicked a 25-yard field goal.

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