

Lacey starts slow, but takes control in second half vs. Barnegat



Lacey's Cameron Blackwell scampers up the sideline for a 34-yard touchdown during the first quarter.
(STAFF PHOTO: PETER ACKERMAN)

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BARNEGAT — Lacey didn't exactly play the type of first half Friday night that their fans have been used to the past few games.

"This was a huge game for Barnegat and we knew they were going to be coming at us hard," said Lacey senior Jarrod Molzon, who managed just 34 yards rushing but clinched the Lions' fifth straight victory with a 95-yard interception return for a touchdown in the third quarter that capped a 28-7 Lacey victory in a Shore Conference Class B South division clash.

"We had some jitters in the first quarter and played a little sloppy. Going into the second half, we knew it would be a dogfight. But we just had to come out in the second half, get things moving on the first possession and stick the ball into the end zone."

Leading 14-7 heading into the third quarter, Lacey (5-0, 4-0) started on its own 47-yard line and went 53 yards on five running plays, capped by a 4-yard touchdown run by senior quarterback Craig Cicardo, to grab a 21-7 lead.

"Eventually, our offensive line started doing what they always do and opened up some holes for us to run through," Molzon said. "From there, we just had to keep fighting until the end."

On Barnegat's ensuing possession, the Bengals (3-1, 2-1) ran off nine plays and brought the ball to the Lions' 25-yard line before Molzon picked off a Nick SanGiacomo pass at the Lions' 5 and rambled down

the right sideline for Lacey's last score. Matt Ruhnke kicked the extra point following Molzon's romp to make it a 21-point game with 5:19 to go in the third quarter.

Following Molzon's interception return, SanGiacomo left the game with an apparent hip injury and didn't return. He finished with 11 completions on 28 attempts for 73 yards and a touchdown.

In the first half, the Bengals, who sent the Lions' offense off the field without a first down during their first two possessions, got on the scoreboard first when SanGiacomo found senior wide receiver Mike DeTroia on the left side of the end zone with an 11-yard TD pass. Sophomore Pat Moran kicked the PAT to give the Bengals a 7-0 lead with 4:23 to go in the first quarter.

But Lacey answered right back, covering 55 yards on 6 plays during its next possession for its first score of the game. Cicardo found senior wide receiver Cameron Blackwell with a pass and Blackwell took it to the house for a 35-yard TD with 2:04 left in the first, before Molzon kicked the PAT to even the score.

The Lions later scored with 2:37 left in the half when Cicardo ran the ball in from 5 yards out, and a Ruhnke PAT made it 14-7.

The victory all but secured the B South division title for the Lions, who will play winless Central Regional on Oct. 22. A victory over the Golden Eagles will give Lacey the division crown outright.

Lacey now will start looking ahead toward earning a possible top seed in the NJSIAA South Jersey Group III playoffs. Heading into Friday's contest, the Lions led the section with 56 power points, two points ahead of Delsea.

"We just have to keep doing what we've done all season, keep our heads up and play our game the best we can each time we go on the field," Molzon said. "We have to stay focused on our next game. Right now, Monday's practice is most important as we prepare for next week. Obviously, we can still improve after tonight."