

Lacey Township tramples Delsea Regional for fourth sectional title

By SUSAN LULGJURAJ, Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, December 5, 2010



Lacey's 55 Dylan Joslin and 40 Matt Uveges celebrate after the final play of the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)

Photos by: Ben Fogletto

LACEY TOWNSHIP - Every time the Lacey Township High School football team did something last week, senior Michael D'Addario pointed out how it was the last time this group of friends would do it.

They attended their last practice.

They had their last stretch.

On Saturday, 20 seniors played in their last game.

And they did it better than they had in any other game this season. The top-seeded Lions won their fourth South Jersey Group III title 56-7 over No. 2 seed Delsea Regional (10-2).

Lacey is No. 2 in The Press Elite 11 and Delsea No. 8.

"Ever since we were little, we always knew this is where we wanted to be our senior year," said running back/defensive back Jarrod Molzon, who had 83 yards and two touchdowns on nine carries. "To do it with this group of kids is awesome."

The Lions came close last year, but lost in the semifinals. The seniors knew they had another chance to get it done together.

They used the sick feeling after last year's loss to motivate them this season.

"We never wanted to feel that way again," said senior linebacker/fullback Tony Pierce.

The Lions didn't even feel what it was like to lose this season. They finished a perfect 12-0 for the school's third undefeated season.

They got eight turnovers in the championship game and won in a way that surprised many of the players.

"I was quite surprised that the kids had saved their best game for last," said coach Lou Virchillo, the school's only coach since starting football 30 years ago. "They really put it together against a tough traditional team like Delsea. I was surprised that we overwhelmed them as much as we did."

For Lacey, this just exemplified their toughness. The way they played was exactly what the players have worked hard for before they even entered high school.

"There is a core group of seniors that have been playing with each other since we were 6 or 7 years old," senior quarterback Craig Cicardo said. "We dreamed of this moment. We suffered for each other to get to this moment."

When these guys arrived at Lacey Township, they were immediately embraced as part of a football family. Thomas Murray showed up in the sixth grade from East Rutherford. Pierce moved to the area from Lakewood during his sophomore year.

Both players were immediately taken in, and they adopted the dream of their teammates.

They wanted to win the South Jersey title in their senior year.

"I remember when I first moved here. These guys were my first friends," Murray said. "We've been together since we were little. This is all anyone ever talked about."

Following the game, many of the players didn't know how to react. They hugged each other and cried in their parents' arms.

There were filled with so much emotion, some didn't know what to do.

As the Lions finally made their way to the locker room, Pierce walked among the fans and hugged different people he considered family during his time at Lacey.

It was the only way he knew how to celebrate.

"I don't even know where I am right now," said Pierce, who had a fumble recovery. "It's the best feeling in the world."

Lacey set the tone right from the start. On the first play from scrimmage, senior Jacob Dabal ran 84 yards for a touchdown just 16 seconds in to the game. Dabal finished with 162 yards and three touchdowns on 10 carries.

Delsea came back to tie the game at 7-7 when senior Tyler Coulbourn scored on a 45-yard pitch with 1:33 left in the first quarter.

It seemed likely that the game was headed for a shootout. But the Lions' defense had another plan.

"They got a little momentum there, but that fired us up," Dabal said. "It gave us the urge to stick it right back to them and not let up the rest of the game."

On Delsea's next possession, with Lacey up 14-7, senior Cameron Blackwell recovered a fumble, which started a trend for the Lions.

Eight of Delsea's 13 possessions ended in a turnover (five fumbles, three interceptions), including a run of six straight through the second and third quarters. Blackwell added an interception and, senior Brian Mykoliw had two interceptions.

"That's assignment football," Murray said. "Coach drilled to us what we have to do. We executed out assignments perfectly."

The constant turnovers gave Lacey a short field nearly the whole game, which gave the Lions easier chances to score.

Lacey scored after four of the turnovers and Zach Torrell scored a defensive touchdown when he stripped the ball in the fourth quarter to make it 56-7 with 6:20 left in the game.

By then, the Lions knew they had the game. They prepared the water coolers to dump over their coaches' heads. The students lined up at openings on the fence surrounding the field.

When the buzzer went off, the coaches were doused, and players and students met at midfield in celebration.

"This is the best thing that's ever happened to us," Cicardo said.

(Press correspondent Jeff Sporer contributed to this report.)

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Delsea Regional 7 0 0 0-7

Lacey Township 7 21 14 14-56

FIRST QUARTER

LT-Dabal 84 run (Molzon kick)

DR-Coulbourn 45 run (Freijomil kick)

SECOND QUARTER

LT-Molzon 2 run (Ruhnke kick)

LT-Dabal 11 run (Molzon kick)

LT-Cicardo 1 run (Molzon kick)

THIRD QUARTER

LT-Dabal 10 run (Molzon kick)

LT-Molzon 8 run (Ruhnke kick)

FOURTH QUARTER

LT-Cicarco 13 run (Ruhnke kick)

LT-Torrell 8 fumble recovery (Ruhnke kick)

TEAM STATS DR LT

First downs 7 12

Rushing 150 338

Passing 29 10

Turnovers 8 2

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Rushing-Delsea: Brooks 13-42, Awotunde 4-9, Saud 6-23, Copeland 1-8, Coulbourn 9-62, Garabino 1-6.

Lacey: Dabal 10-162, Cicardo 14-83, Molzon 9-83, Torrell 4-10.

Passing-Delsea: Awotunde 2-8-3-29. **Lacey:** Cicardo 3-5-1-10.

Receiving-Delsea: Coulbourn 2-29. **Lacey:** Torrell 1-8, Blackwell 1- (-1), Dabal 1- (-10).

Records-Lacey Township 12-0, Delsea Regional 10-2.



(l-r) Lacey's 40 Matt Uveges, 65 Dave Vieira and 28 Tony Pierce celebrate after the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 65 Dave Vieira and 57 Lex Knapp celebrate after the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 25 Jarrod Molzon runs out of the grasp of Delsea's 32 Marshall Brooks during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 65 Dave Vieira and 57 Lex Knapp celebrate after the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey team celebrates with the trophy after the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 21 Jake Dabal runs in the grasp of Delsea's 24 Sherron Thomas (left) and 10 Stephan Lewis during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 56 Brian Mykoliw picks up a fumble by Delsea's 3 Tyler Coulbourn during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 77 Tyrell Smith signals a TD during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 13 Craig Cicardo congratulates kicker 15 Matt Ruhne on a point after during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 8 Zach Torrell runs pursued by Delsea's 84 TJ Berryman and 3 Tyler Coulbourn during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 21 Jake Dabal runs for a TD on the first play of the first half after the kick off. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 13 Craig Cicardo runs during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey coach Craig Cicardo Sr. hugs 40 Matt Uveges at the end of the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey's 56 Brian Mykoliw celebrates his interception during the first half. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)



Lacey coach Lou Vircillo (center). Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)