



Townies open with a rush

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BY JOHN GILLOOLY
Journal Sports Writer

SOUTH KINGSTOWN -- A year ago, Jerome Blair was the other guy -- the player who carried the ball for the East Providence on the few occasions Jamie Silva wasn't running with it.

Now Silva is at Boston College, and if last night was any indication this year Blair is The Man.

Blair, a junior fullback, scored all four East Providence touchdowns last night as the Townies opened defense of their Division I state title with a 27-0 triumph over South Kingstown.

Blair put on an awesome running exhibition in the first 24 minutes as the Townies didn't waste any time showing they are ready for a title defense.

Sparked by Blair, the Townies jumped out to a 13-0 lead in the first six minutes, then added seven points in the second quarter for a 20-0 halftime lead.

Blair opened the scoring with a 10-yard run only five plays after the opening kickoff. Only three minutes later, he broke loose on a 60-yard touchdown dash.

"Jerome in his own right is an outstanding running back, but when you have a horse like we had with Jamie, you ride him. You're a fool if you don't," East Providence coach Sandy Gorham said. "I told Jerome I think he's a 1,200-yard rusher this year if he keeps working on it and improving like he has."

Blair got a good start on that goal last night as he picked up 84 yards.

The way the East Providence defense was playing Blair's two early touchdowns were more than the Townies needed.

The Townies looked even quicker on defense than they did on offense at the outset. Time after time East Providence defenders were in the South Kingstown backfield before the Rebels could get a play in motion. The result was that South Kingstown only ran 10 plays on three possessions in the first quarter.

The East Providence attack was momentarily stalled when the Townies fumbled twice in the first six

minutes of the second quarter. But with 5:52 to play in the quarter, the Townies took over on the South Kingstown 35 and three plays later they were in the end zone again.

Blair covered all the yardage in three runs, the final dash going 12 yards.

South Kingstown's only serious first-half scoring threat came late in the second quarter. Sparked by the running and passing of quarterback Jake Flaherty, the Rebels marched from their own 20 to the East Providence 20 with 1:38 to play in the half. But the drive ended there on a three incomplete passes and a sack.

The Rebels never seriously threatened to break the shutout in the second half.

"I thought all along our defense would be our strong point," Gorham said. "They're very quick. That's the strength of our team. If our offense can keep pace and stay composed I think we will have a shot."

The Townies' offense bogged down again in the third quarter because of a couple of fumbles and several penalties. But a 20-yard run by the Townies' Steve Zarembka with about five minutes to play in the fourth quarter put the ball on the South Kingstown 3 and three plays later Blair rushed the final yard for his fourth TD.

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