

2011 Jr. Skyland Football Conference Champions



Melillo/Williams lead Hillsborough to Jr Skyland Conference Championship over Bridgewater.

Ryan Melillo took Hillsborough's first play from Scrimmage 51 yards for a TD to open up the scoring behind the strong blocking of Sam Crisci, Connor Genes, Ben Pasternack, Jim Suseck, Mike Grabon, Nick DiGirolamo and fullback Paul Michinard and the Jr Raiders never looked back. Melillo had 8 carries for 158 yards and 2 TDs to lead the Hillsborough running attack. Zach Eilbacher added the extra point and Hillsborough led 8-0. After trading punts, Bridgewater put up a TD of their own but the extra point was blocked by Matt Matson and Hillsborough led 8-6. On the next series Rob Wardell (4 for 6 passing, 101 yards and 1 TD) hit Zach Williams for a 67 yard TD pass on a perfectly thrown fly route. Eilbacher added the extra point and Hillsborough led 16-6.

On the next series Bridgewater was forced to punt and Hillsborough brought a lot of heat with Suseck sacking the punter at the Bridgewater 29 yard line. Hillsborough drove the ball to the Bridgewater 7 yard line before some untimely penalties and a sack stalled the drive. At this point the Hillsborough defense led by Frankie McCarter (10 tackles), Suseck (8 tackles, 2 pass deflections and a fumble recovery), Damian Gonzalez (6 tackles, 1 pass deflection), Melillo (6 tackles), Matt Matson (5 tackles) and Shay Sarkar (4 tackles) took over the game. Hillsborough's defensive backs led by Gonzalez, Dillon Zimmerman, Dan Stoddard and Melillo shut down the Bridgewater passing attack all day. After an incomplete pass and a Hillsborough timeout, Bridgewater was faced with a 3rd and 8 from their own 9 with about 90 seconds left in the half. Bridgewater's QB faded back to pass and Suseck forced a fumble which Bridgewater recovered in their own end zone for a safety and Hillsborough led 18-6. Bridgewater's QB faced intense pressure all afternoon by Pasternack, Sarkar, Suseck, Genes and Al Fisher. Bridgewater then kicked off from their own 20 yard line and Zach Williams returned the kick 58 yards for a Hillsborough TD. Eilbacher added the extra point and Hillsborough took a commanding lead into the half at 26-6.

In the 3rd quarter Hillsborough's defense continued to thwart a Bridgewater comeback while the offense kept the clock running. However, Hillsborough found itself with 1st and 10 at it's own 17

yard line early in the 4th quarter. Once again Melillo found a seam and went 83 yards for his 2nd TD of the game. Eilbacher added the extra point (a perfect 4 for 4 kicking) and the game was essentially over as Hillsborough led 34-6.

The Hillsborough Jr Raiders after a 1-3 start ran the table with 6 straight wins and captured the Jr Skyland Championship. Hillsborough has won the conference title 4 of the 7 years the conference has been in existence (2005, 2006, 2008, and 2011) including winning the State Championship in 2008. Hillsborough will enter the semi final round of the State playoffs again on Sunday December 4th (opponent currently unknown) and hopes to play for the NJ Unlimited Weight Youth Football Association (NJUWYFA) championship on Saturday December 10th.

Game MVP: Ryan Melillo/Zach Williams