

Hillsborough Jr. Raiders

Football, Cheerleading, Track & Field



Jr. Raider BORO PRIDE, the tradition of champions continues in 2012.

On Saturday, November 17th, the Hillsborough Jr. Raiders JV (Grades 5-6) team (7-1) took on the undefeated Ridge Jr. Devils JV (8-0) team at Hunterdon Central High School in the 2012 Jr. Skylands Football Conference Championship game. The Jr. Devils defeated the Raiders in the first game of the year, but Hillsborough was not going to be denied a victory after making it to the championship game for the second year in a row. Hillsborough offense dominated the line of scrimmage all night from the first snap of the game against a big and talented Ridge defense. Lead by the running of power Full Back Brian Reilly (27 carries for 127 yards) and slashing quick Tail Back Dylan Boczon (11 carries for 77 yards) the Jr. Raiders executed the ground and pound game plan. The Jr. Raiders controlled the ball and the time of possession allowing Ridge only 16 plays of offense for the entire game. After exchanging punts in the first series the Jr. Raiders took over and marched down the field on an 11 play drive behind the offensive line anchored by Justin Nitschke, Michael Swetz, Jimmy Burke, Alex Koll, Joe Lubas, Robert Pasternack and Tommy Zdroik. Quarterback Matt Popadiuk fed the ball to Reilly who led the way with hard-nosed carries up the middle. Boczon made key runs in the drive off tackle bouncing outside making tacklers miss

gaining key yardage to keep drive alive. On 3 and 5 from the 5-yard line Reilly lowered his shoulders and ran through tacklers for the game's first score. The extra point attempt was no good.

The ensuing kickoff saw Ridge return the ball to the Jr. Raiders 35-yard line. Three plays later, a Ridge Wide Receiver took the handoff on a jet sweep cutting back in the middle of the field then broke it down the sideline for a Ridge touchdown. They successfully kicked the extra point to take a 8-6 lead midway through the second quarter. Hillsborough started driving again but time ran out in the half before they could score. The stout and physical Hillsborough defense held Ridge in the first possession of the second half, which the coaches emphasized all year as the most important possession of the game. The defensive front line, led by Greg Koll, Justin Nitshke, Jaden Bailey, T. J. Shultz, Jon Seaton, Ryan Gemignani and Tommy Zdroik, held Ridge's high powered rushing attack in check all night and forced a three and out. The ensuing Jr. Raider drive ended when they attempted to convert a 4th down - coming up inches short. However, the Jr. Raider defense, with Reilly and Boczon at Linebacker supported by the secondary of Matt Michinard, Alex Marsh and Chris Zickert, forced yet another Ridge three and out. The Ridge punt was returned by Boczon to the Hillsborough 32-yard line. With 8 minutes and 40 seconds left in the fourth quarter, the Jr. Raiders took the ball and started what will be known as "the Drive for the Championship" according to Head Coach Jamie Moore.

The first big play of the drive was on second and five; Matt Popadiuk made a great play action fake and took the bootleg 16 yards for a first down near mid-field. The next big play came on 4th down and 4 yards to go as Brian Reilly lined up in the shotgun at QB. He rolled to his left and found Boczon wide open in the flat for an 8-yard gain. Two plays later, with Popadiuk back in at QB, he again bootlegged to his right; under pressure from Ridge defense, he saw his Tight End Tommy Zdroik downfield and threw it up to him. Zdroik, surrounded by two Ridge defenders, used his height advantage by leaping up and snatching the ball out of the air for another Jr. Raider first down at the Ridge 19-yard line. Reilly then carried the ball five times in a row, which included converting a 4th and 1 on the 10-yard line, to get the Jr. Raiders down to the 8-yard line. With the clock under a minute to go in the game, Dylan Boczon took the handoff on a sweep to the left with Reilly as the lead blocker. The offensive line did the job again along with a key crack back block on Ridge by Wide Receiver Matt Michinard giving Boczon the alley to the goal line with one man to beat. Boczon ran for the cone and dove over the goal line with the ball extended for the Jr. Raider touchdown capping a 14 play drive that burned almost nine minutes off the clock, giving the Raiders a 12-6 lead; the extra point kick was blocked. The defense, led by coordinator Jimmy Burke, took the field with only 36 seconds left in the game. On the third play, the Ridge quarterback threw a long pass, which was deflected and intercepted by Chris Zickert as time ran out. Coach Jamie Moore said his team executed the game plan perfectly and won the physical battle on the field. "The Drive' was an unbelievable series and an illustration of teamwork and execution that is exceptional at this level", Moore said. "This team proved that they were the best team and earned the Jr. Skylands Championship. I give a tremendous amount of credit to my outstanding coaching staff of Paul Popadiuk, Jimmy Burke, Don Marsh, Norm Washington, Alan Zdroik, Marty Mayes, and Pete Davies." Game MVPs were Brian Reilly and Dylan Boczon.

