

Football: West Deptford wins S.J. 2 title

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Mike Oldt has been playing football for eight years.

He's felt that familiar sensation in his stomach before big games in youth football, in sub-varsity action and as a member of the West Deptford High School football field.

But this was different.

"I actually threw up I was so excited," Oldt said after helping West Deptford to a 19-13 victory over Cedar Creek in the South Jersey Group 2 championship game.

Oldt, a senior linebacker, and many of the rest of the Eagles were overcome with emotion after the thrilling victory before a large crowd at Richard Wackar Stadium on the campus of Rowan University.

Oldt's pass-rush pressure led by sophomore Kenny Lim's game-clinching interception with one minute, 32 seconds to play and popped the cork on a wild celebration on the sideline and in the stands.

"I've never been so proud," West Deptford coach Clyde Folsom said "This group, this senior group in particular, I'm not sure we've ever had a harder-working group in the history of the program."

The victory completed a perfect season for West Deptford (12-0) and secured the program's seventh South Jersey Group 2 title since 2002.

It also avenged a 28-27 loss to Cedar Creek this same game last year, a result that seemed to haunt the tension-filled West Deptford sideline through the fourth quarter of the taut, tense contest.

"It was like deja vu all over again," West Deptford senior safety Ryan Baglvio said.

Said senior linebacker Kyle Garrison: "We had bad dreams for a year about that game."

Senior all-purpose Bo Melton and senior two-way lineman Owen Bowles, a pair of Rutgers recruits, played the final games of their careers for Cedar Creek (10-2).

Cedar Creek coach Tim Watson hugged Melton and Bowles and several other players on the field after addressing the team following the loss.

"We lost to a very good team," Watson said of West Deptford.

Folsom said the game was a "classic" that echoed of last year's battle between the teams.

In that game, Cedar Creek drove for a late touchdown, kicked the extra point and emerged with a one-point victory.

Down by 19-13 in the fourth quarter, the Pirates were again in position to take the lead with a touchdown and extra point but couldn't make the big plays that have become the hallmark of the seven-year-old program.

"We just couldn't get in sync or find a rhythm on offense," Watson said.

West Deptford's defense was led by seniors such as Oldt, Kyle Garrison, Nick Novak and Baglivo as well as junior Peter Orio and sophomore Lim.

"Me and (fellow senior safety Darren McKeown), we sat in the back of the film room every day this week taking notes," Baglivo said. "We wrote down every tendency, everything."

Folsom said his defense showed it could defend a spread offense.

"We're built to run and stop the run," Folsom said. "The game is going to the spread and we were able to make enough plays to slow them down."

The other twist to West Deptford's victory was big plays through the air as well as a trick play that converted a third-and-22 early in the fourth quarter.

The passes were a 34-yard completion from Orio to Baglivo that set up the go-ahead touchdown in the second quarter and a 33-yard touchdown pass from Orio to Lim on a third-and-14 midway in the third quarter.

The fake reverse on 3rd-and-22 resulted in a 25-yard gain by senior Anthony Seas.

"Thirty-two speed back-to-back keep," Folsom said of the play call. "It's was critical. That was a big part of us winning."

Oldt, Garrison and many of the other seniors gathered in the shadow of the scoreboard after the victory, savoring the result of their last game.

West Deptford had not won a sectional title since 2012, when the current seniors were in eighth grade. Folsom said he "never" remembered a class as determined to take their place among the tops in program history.

"It's just surreal," Oldt said. "I don't even know how to describe it. 'Euphoric' would be the word."

Cedar Creek 7 0 0 6 -- 13

West Deptford 6 7 6 0 -- 19

WD: Anthony Seas 21 run (kick fail)

CC: Malachi Melton 19 pass from Jesse Milza (Pat Moran kick)

WD: Peter Orio 3 run (Mike Bilodeau kick)

WD: Kenny Lim 33 pass from Orio (kick fail)

CC: Bo Melton 27 pass from Milza (kick fail)