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# Colts distance selves from Clearview in win

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UPPER DEERFIELD TWP. - On Cumberland Regional High School's senior day, it was only fitting that the man head coach Tom Lake called "the best running back in the state" stole the show.

Senior Andrew Pierce continued his remarkable season, rushing for both Cumberland touchdowns and intercepting a John Robinson pass with 14 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter to seal the Colts 17-7 win over Tri-County Conference Royal Division and South Jersey Group III playoff rival Clearview Friday night.

The victory kept the Colts playoff hopes alive.

"I was so emotional coming out here because I'm a senior and I've played four years on this field and I just wanted to come out there and pick up a win," said Pierce, who carried 19 times for 217 yards in what was likely his last time playing in front of a home crowd.

The Colts are now 5-2 while Clearview dropped to 4-3.

Each team's first drive proved difficult as Cumberland quarterback Aaron Jacobs's first pass of the game was batted at the line of scrimmage before landing in the waiting arms of Clearview defensive back Nick Cacciola. However, Cacciola fumbled a handoff on the Pioneers first play of the night to give the ball right back to the Colts.

Pierce immediately went to work, breaking off a 42-yard run down the sideline off of an option to set up a 20-yard field goal by Ryan Stant to put Cumberland on the board, 3-0, midway through the first quarter.

Robinson and Clearview returned the favor on the ensuing drive when Robinson connected with a wide open Chad Gravinese. The senior receiver snaked his way through traffic for a 51-yard score to give the Pioneers a 7-3 lead. Gravinese was Robinson's favorite target, hauling in four receptions for 114 yards.

"They were dropping their corners on the outside and they were covered and the middle seemed to be open because the linebackers were blitzing, so we just took advantage of it as much as we could," said Robinson, who completed 15-of-25 passes for 260 yards. "Chad and I have grown up playing together so we had a pretty good rhythm."

Pierce and the Colts would not be held in stable for long, though. On the second play of the following Cumberland drive, Pierce broke off a 51-yard score of his own, stiff-arming an initial defender and outracing the rest of the defense to the end zone, and the Colts took a 10-7 lead. That score held until the fourth quarter, when Pierce added a 71-yard touchdown to give the Colts some breathing room.

Lost in the shuffle was the dominant Cumberland defense, which sacked Robinson eight times. Leading the way was junior linebacker Louis Velazquez, who got to the quarterback twice.

"They brought a lot of pressure the entire game," said Robinson. "The line did as good a job as they could but they always had an extra man in, and we couldn't pick up their blitzes."

Following the game, Lake noted the goals the Colts had set, and accomplished, in the contest: no more than 13 points given up, at least two turnovers forced, and to pressure Robinson.

"Velazquez and Joseph Hamidy, Kyle Irons, Devon Pizzo, Gabe Smith; look at what they did defensively tonight to put the quarterback on his back, and make him throw with his feet moving instead of being able to set them. They don't get to score touchdowns, but tonight they paved the way for a victory," said Lake.

For Cumberland, Jacobs only needed to go to the air five times, completing one pass. Senior Malik Jones helped out on the ground with 30 yards on nine carries.

"These guys are teammates but they call themselves family, so they take care of each other and they go play football," said Lake. "It's going to be tough to take the smile off my face, but tomorrow we've got to start getting ready for Williamstown."