

## Sep. 30 Football Previews – Week 4



*Jordan Dunn and Steinert will be reaching out for their third straight victory when Hightstown visits Hamilton Square today (Photo by Dennis Symons Jr./purchase photos at [www.dennissymons.com](http://www.dennissymons.com)).*

**WWPN (0-3) at Hamilton (3-0), Saturday, 2:30 p.m.**

### **Hornets need to avoid a letdown against winless WW-P North**

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

**Sep. 30:** TGIH.

Thank goodness it's Homecoming.

If ever a scenario presented a time for a letdown, it's Saturday's tilt featuring winless West Windsor-Plainsboro North and undefeated Hamilton West.

Throw in the fact the Hornets are coming off an emotional victory over Nottingham, and it's a pretty good recipe for a "trap" game.

"Yeah, it is," coach Tom Hoglen said. "But the good thing is it's homecoming for us, so our kids will be excited.

"We've had a great week of practice and I think we're excited about West Windsor North coming to town this week. We know in this league you can never take anybody lightly, so we're gonna work hard and try to play mistake-free football, which we've been able to do the first three weeks."

Indeed they have, as the Hornets have yet to throw an interception or lose a fumble.

The passing game has been used only at opportune times as Hamilton has ground out 896 rushing yards on 118 carries, a whopping 7.6 yards per carry. Brett Stroman leads the way with 568 yards (and had 156 last week, not 116 as reported here and in *The Trentonian*), but others got

involved last week as well and quarterback Mark Acquaviva threw three touchdown passes.

It offers a tough test for North, coming off a 26-7 loss to Princeton in which it allowed 315 yards of offense.

“The biggest thing is they’ve had some injuries from the beginning of the year until now,” Hoglen said. “If they get some of those guys back that they had earlier in the year they can be a dangerous team. It’s a matter of what they have coming back.

“But they were a playoff team last year. They’re solid. Three years ago they hadn’t won a game and they went in and beat West Windsor South. Their coach will have them fired up and prepared.”

And Hoglen knows his team has to put the big win over Nottingham behind it.

“We had a long discussion about that on Monday and so far we seem to be working in the right direction,” he said. “So we’re happy with that.”

**Lawrence (0-3) at Nottingham (2-1), Saturday, 2 p.m.**

## **Adams still waiting for Northstars to glitter the way they are capable**

It has come to this.

Jon Adams is using the “P” word.

“We have yet to play to our ‘potential’ – a word I hate, by the way,” said the Nottingham coach as his team prepares for the Hall of Fame game against Lawrence Saturday. “We gotta fix our problems and we have worked hard this week to do those things and get ready for a bruiser of a game. So we better play with some URGENCY!”

Especially considering the Northstars are coming off their first loss of the season to Hamilton last week. In the battle for playoff power points, losses must be kept to a minimum.

Nottingham’s biggest problem last week against the Hornets dead-on game plan, was being able to bring runners down even when they were in the right spot. In referring to whether his team made any adjustments this week, Adams simplified it to the bare bones.

“Hopefully the biggest adjustment we made this week is that we will tackle,” he said. “Our tackling, well, stunk last week. We would hit a guy in the backfield only to fall to our knees and see him gain another five to seven yards.

“It is unacceptable the way we tackled last week. We have to play better defense. Coach (Frank) Gatto and my staff have spent a lot of time working on fundamentals this week.”

Nottingham allowed 308 rushing yards to the Hornets and are facing a Lawrence team that ran for 405 against Steinert last week. The Cardinals Jihad Bryant proved he is back from knee problems with 126 yards and Semei Mitchell galloped for 160.

“Lawrence had an excellent freshmen team last year, one of best I have seen in a long time,” Adams said. “They also have Bryant back and are improving weekly.

Coach (Rob) Radice has reloaded the cupboard. They had a tough start but are building. We certainly know we have our hands full with an excellent offensive football team.”

Again, it all comes back to tackling. . .and “that’ word.

“We have not played to our potential on defense,” Adams said. “We spent the entire week working on getting better in all phases. They present many problems for sure. Mitchell and Bryant of course and they like to throw too, especially to (Charlie Morreale), who’s very good.”

Losing linebacker Kyle James to injury has not helped the Northstars cause, especially at this

time of year when Nottingham is running a gauntlet that includes Hamilton, Lawrence and West Windsor-Plainsboro South (which comes up on Thursday).

“I knew this was going to be a physical stretch,” Adams said. “Three teams with great backs who like to pound the rock. We have to get back on track this week and Lawrence will not be easy.

“I don’t care what happened to them in previous weeks. Lawrence is a solid club, Rob is an excellent coach and his staff will have that team ready.”

**Hightstown (0-3) at Steinert (2-1), Saturday, 2 p.m.**

## **Spartans look to extend winning streak during Brescia’s homecoming**

Hightstown offers up a third winless team to a township opponent in the same day, but like Lawrence it is a team better than its record.

And while it is the official Homecoming at West, this game marks the unofficial Homecoming for Pete Brescia.

The second-year Rams head coach grew up roaming the Steinert sidelines as a ball boy for his father, Pete, and was a Spartans assistant before going to Hightstown. Although the two teams met last year, this will be Brescia’s first visit to Steinert as a head coach.

None of that is of any concern to the Spartans, however, as they only want to build on the momentum of two straight wins over Rancocas Valley and Lawrence.

“Hightstown is young but dangerous,” Steinert coach Dan Caruso said. “The sophomore quarterback (Dustin Kollman) is quite a player. I don’t know where he came from but Pete has done a great job with the kid. He seems really mature for a young player and makes great decisions on the field.

“Overall they are a very tough and scrappy team. They play through the whistle and I have been preaching to my players all week that if they are not ready to play Hightstown they are going to get smacked in the mouth. They fly to the football and they make plays.”

Steinert is coming off a game in which quarterback Adam Riese had a performance that may never be duplicated at Steinert by throwing five touchdown passes and running for two more TDs. Riese was the run-away winner for 12<sup>th</sup> Man TD Club’s Offensive Back of the week.

And while he helped Steinert enjoy a balanced attack, much of the attack centered on Riese. Caruso hopes to get an old reliable into the mix.

We are looking to be balanced and we do need to establish the run early and we have multiple guys that can get us going there,” the coach said. “Adam is our leading rusher, but we still have Tyler Zandomenego who was our leading rusher last year.

“Tyler is a great leader and team player because he has never complained about us spreading it around. I know he is ready to have a break out game soon.”

The biggest concern entering the game is Steinert’s defense, which was shredded for 400 rushing yards by the Cardinals last week. Hightstown is a solid passing team, but Lawrence Mendies can bust loose when given some cracks.

“The coaches have been working all week to correct our mistakes on the defensive side of the ball,” Caruso said. “The major problem last week was not getting 11 hats to the football and playing passive.

“All week we have been playing with more urgency. We have tweaked a few things here and there but the main thing we want to keep preaching is play ‘Spartan Defense.’ Let’s get back to doing the things we have done here for the last three years.”

