

King Philip reigns in the rain for Div. 2 South crown

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Mansfield High running back Michael DeBolt carries the ball up the middle against King Philip Regional High Friday night in Mansfield.

MARK STOCKWELL/THE SUN CHRONICLE

MANSFIELD — For the third consecutive season, the two-time defending MIAA Division 2 Super Bowl champion Warriors of King Philip Regional High are heading back to Gillette Stadium.

The Warriors did it all on defense, intercepting a pass, recovering a fumble and denying Mansfield High access to the end zone on six successive series after the Hornets took the lead on their very first offensive set.

On the other side of the ball, King Philip followed the lead of junior running back Ryan Halliday (97 yards rushing), junior quarterback Robbie Jarest (game-winning touchdown with 5:38 remaining) and junior kicker Cole Baker (38 yard field goal and a conversion kick) to take home a thrilling 10-7 victory at Alumni Field Friday.

Bring on North Andover High at Gillette.

Jarest directed the Warriors on a 49-yard, 11-play drive that consumed 5:53 of the clock at the outset of the fourth quarter, scoring KP's only touchdown to go ahead on a 1-yard dive behind 6-foot-2, 225-pound junior center Sean Piller.

Most impressively, Halliday converted a fourth-and-1 at the Mansfield 41-yard line and Jarest converted a third-and-5, turning the right corner for eight yards to the Hornet 8-yard line.

Senior Aidan Bender halted a Hornets' drive with 1:07 left in the first half by recovering a Mansfield fumble at the KP 17-yard line, Warrior senior safety Deric Casado put a halt to the Hornets' potential go-ahead touchdown drive with an interception at the KP 16-yard line with 2:15 remaining in the game.

"We were ready for it — that's KP defense right there, we knew that it would be a defensive battle."

The KP defense limited Mansfield to just 101 yards of offense during the first half, 51 of those on six runs by quarterback Aidan Sacco. Though the Hornets crossed midfield on three of their five first half series, points were not easy to take.

“Both defenses played great,” Mansfield High coach Mike Redding said of his Hornets limiting King Philip to only 61 yards on offense (41 by Halliday) during the first half and keeping the Warriors without a touchdown for their first six series.

“If we score in the second half, we win, but they hung around — field position was big, we couldn’t punch it across,” Redding added of the Hornets being unable to score from the KP 18-yard line with just over a minute left in the first half and not advancing beyond their own 30-yard line after taking the second half kickoff.

“If we get the score at the end of the half, we would have got it to 14 (a 14-3 lead), that would have been big, but we didn’t,” Redding added. “The weather played in to their style of game.”

Halliday dropped a Hornet runner for a three-yard loss on a third down and five-yard play during Mansfield’s first series of the second half. Junior linebacker Shawn Conniff dropped a Hornet runner for a one-yard loss on a third down and one-yard play on Mansfield’s second series in the third quarter.

Casado then picked off a Hornet pass right after Khristian Conner converted a fourth-and-3 for Mansfield with an 8-yard run for a first down to the KP 42-yard line. Mansfield scored its lone touchdown as a result of a 3-yard shanked KP punt on the Warriors’ first offensive series, the Hornets gaining possession at the KP 37-yard line. Seven plays later, Sacco scored on a 16-yard run up the middle with 270-pound senior guard Daenin Walker springing him loose — after Sacco had converted a third down and five-yard situation with a 16-yard run.

KP started first half series at its 25, 48, Mansfield 44, 26 and 17 yard lines, but could get points only out of its third set. With Halliday converting a third down and two-yard play at the Mansfield 36 and aided by a Hornet defensive holding penalty, KP had to settle for a Baker field goal after Mansfield senior linebacker Chris Copponi made a pair of deft tackles.

“When they (Mansfield) didn’t score before the half, all right its 7-3, we’re all right,” KP coach Brian Lee said. “We couldn’t have played any worse offensively and made some mistakes on defense as well. Field position was a problem. But down by only four, okay, that’s KP football.

King Philip 10, Mansfield 7

	KP	Msf.
First downs	15	10
Total yardage	149	158
Rushing yardage	120	142
Passing yardage	29	20
Sacks-yds.	0-0	1-4
Comp.-Att.-Int.	3-8-1	1-6-2
Punts-Avg.	4-25.2	4-29.0
Fumbles-lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-yds.	2-20	7-75

Team	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
King Philip	0	3	0	7	10
Mansfield	7	0	0	0	7

Scoring summary

First quarter

Msf. — Aidan Sacco 16 run (Mike DeBolt kick), 6:12.

Second quarter

KP — Cole Baker 38 field goal, 10:01.

Fourth quarter

KP — Robbie Jaresst 1 run (Baker kick), 5:38.

INDIVIDUAL MANSFIELD STATISTICS

RUSHING:

Gill 9-32, Sacco 9-54, DeBolt

5-27, Conner 5-20, Plath 1-9.

PASSING:

Sacco 1-6-2 — 20.

RECEIVING:

Gill 1-20.

MISSED FIELD GOALS: None.