Newark Academy junior running back Josh Martin provided plenty of inspiration for everyone on hand on Homecoming Day at the Livingston campus with his spectacular performance in the second half of last Saturday's 32-16 win over the Harvey (N.Y.) school as he rushed for 155 yards and scored two touchdowns after coming to the NA field following a memorial service for his dad, who passed away just eight days prior. (Photos by Vinny Carchietta/MCV Video & Photography)

Newark Academy’s Martin Has 2nd Half Which Touches The School Community

By Steve Tober
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LIVINGSTON- Newark Academy coach Billy Blomn stood in his team’s locker room at halftime last Saturday with his team leading the Harvey (N.Y.) School by a narrow 8-0 margin, fully knowing that his Minutemen had to have a strong second half to earn their fifth victory of the season, but he didn’t know for sure who he would ultimately turn to in the game’s final 24 minutes to help get that mission firmly accomplished.

Then, he turned around and saw his junior running back Josh Martin, in uniform and ready to hit the field with his teammates. That sight might have been nothing out of the ordinary except for
the fact that Martin was not expected to be on NA’s Livingston campus last Saturday since he was attending a memorial service for his dad, who had passed away suddenly the week prior.

However, young Martin had other thoughts about what he intended to do Saturday afternoon, and perhaps returning to the game he loves and playing with good thoughts about his dad were the therapy he needed at that time, and certainly his presence and overwhelming performance were an inspiration for many as he helped lead his team with a spectacular and heartfelt effort.

Martin would go out and rush for 155 yards and two touchdowns in the game’s final two quarters to help the Minutemen (5-2) seal the deal on a 32-16 win over Harvey on Homecoming Day at Coursen Field with many school administrators and fans truly touched by his courageous effort under very trying circumstances.

“Understanding the situation Josh was in, and then watching as he ran out on the field for the second half, we were just so touched by seeing him at our Homecoming game,” said NA Athletic Director Ted Gilbreath. “I was standing alongside Liz Bona, our associate athletic director and head girls basketball coach, our trainer Jamie Kaczanoski, and Lisa Grider, our director of advancement, and we all were tearing up with emotion when we saw him come running through the gate to join team for the second half.

“Even if it was just his presence on the sideline to just cheer his team on, it would have more than enough just to have him there, but the way he went out on the field and just played his tail off as one of our star players, it was incredible to watch and we’re all exceptionally proud of him in our school community, that’s for sure!”

For Martin’s head coach, there is simply a special persona surrounding the young man that really makes it all make total sense when there is a chance to reflect on all that ensued during what turned out to be a very emotional Homecoming Day at NA.

“It just shows the type of kid Josh is,” said Blomn. “Not only is he one of the nicest kids on our team but he’s also never takes a play off when he’s out there, so when I knew he was definitely ready to play in the second half I found out quite quickly he was the one to turn to and he really excelled for us beyond anything we could have imagined on a day as tough as that had to be for him and his family.”

Newark Academy (5-2 overall has had a very solid season in its first year in the Hudson Valley League which encompasses independent schools from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

Junior quarterback Elias Neibart has been a key performer running the offense and he also excelled as an outside linebacker and defensive back against Harvey, registering nine tackles, including two for a loss. On the offensive side of the ball, he passed for 70 yards and a touchdown and ran for another 70 and an additional TD.

Two-way lineman Brandon Dempsey, a senior co-captain, has continued to excel on both sides of the ball with his blocking and his tackling as he registered seven stops against Harvey.
And, with inspirational performers such as Martin to encapsulate what life and football can be all about, the positive vibes are many for NA as it prepares to face longtime arch prep rival Montclair Kimberley Academy (4-3) 1 p.m., Saturday, at Van Brunt Field in Montclair.

“To know that Josh lost his dad a week ago, and then had his memorial service on the day of our Harvey game had me thinking that I would not see him for Saturday’s contest,” said Blomn. “But, I also know that he enjoys being around the boys on our team and playing this great game, and I think he simply realized this is something he needed to try and do, and I’m sure his dad would have been extremely proud of his son, who certainly left all of us with many heartfelt and warm feelings as he played with such a passion while shining on the field in such a nice victory on Homecoming Day for our team and the entire school community which was so touched by his efforts.”

Newark Academy head coach Billy Blomn rallies the troops during latest NA victory
Two-way lineman and senior co-captain Brandon Dempsey is one of NA’s steadiest players

Newark Academy junior QB Elias Neibart (13) lunges forward for extra yardage during last Saturday’s Hudson Valley League football victory against the Harvey (N.Y.) School.