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Sports

## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: Scales, Obado make key plays as Nottingham pulls away from Princeton

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By RICH FISHER  
For The Trentonian

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HAMILTON — Troy Scales was worried about pass interference and Esayah Obado was worried about passing out.

But both seniors carried out their duties successfully to give Nottingham's football team a 42-28 victory over stubborn Princeton on the Northstars' Senior Day yesterday.

Nottingham overcame a massive performance by Little Tigers receiver Eric Shorter, who had nine catches for 223 yards and two touchdowns.

"We couldn't cover him with a blanket," said coach Jon "Big Dawg" Adams.

But they covered him when it counted.

Trailing 28-21, the Little Tigers (3-6) got a fumble recovery from Kevin White and marched to the Nottingham 14 with under two minutes left. On first down, Stuart Hasty made a big hit for no gain.

On second down, Alex Mitko tossed one to Liam Helstrom in the end zone but Scales came from behind to knock the ball away while making some contact.

"I thought the flag was coming out, to be honest," said Scales, although it appeared to be a good play.

After a penalty put the ball at the 14, a scrambling Mitko tried to find Shorter one last time. But a high pass tipped off his hand and Scales went down to make a one-handed interception inside the 1-yard line with just under a minute left.

"I wasn't even aware of the sideline," Scales said. "Then the ref said my knee hit before I got out."

Nottingham (5-3) hoped to run out the clock, but taking a knee would mean a safety. After Obado gained nothing on first down, he went straight ahead again, and suddenly broke out of the pack and steamrolled more than 99 yards to tie the world record for longest touchdown run from scrimmage.

"I was just trying to get a couple yards," said Obado, who rushed for 157 yards and produced five touchdowns. "Coach said if you get a couple feet we'll win the game. That's a looong run with the ball. I got tired about the 50-yard line. I thought for sure Shorter was gonna catch me or I was gonna go down."

But Ayoub Kamara blocked Shorter at the last minute and Obado went the distance. Birthday boy Albert Ogogo then

completed a 6-for-6 day with a final PAT boot.

The one downer for Nottingham, aside from allowing 425 yards of offense, was that Neptune beat Colts Neck. The way Adams had it figured, the Northstars needed two of three teams — Neptune, Middletown South and Hamilton — to lose for Nottingham to make the playoffs. Only the Hornets lost, however.

Still, it could not take away from a great offensive effort by the 'Stars and their visitors.

"Kudos to that team," Adams said. "The coaches had them well prepared and they battled back and never panicked."

Princeton gave an early indication of what was to come on the game's first play when Javon Pannell hit Shorter with an 81-yard halfback option pass for a touchdown.

Obado, who was 10-for-14 for 161 yards passing, found Kamara and Luke Westerberg for touchdowns before Pannell (142 rushing yards) tied it. But Kamara returned the ensuing kickoff 91 yards to make it 21-14 and the 'Stars had the lead for good.

Westerberg caught another TD pass in the third before Mitko, who threw for 195 yards, scored on a 1-yard run. Obado rushed for a score before Shorter caught a 34-yard TD pass to set up the wild final minutes.

"It was an amazing job by them," Adams said. "We didn't play real well at times but when our backs were to the wall, we came through."

Thanks to Scales and Obado, whose concerns were unfounded.

Nottingham 42, Princeton 28

Princeton (3-6) 7 7 7 7 — 28

Nottingham (5-3) 14 7 7 14 — 42

P—Shorter 81 pass from Pannell (O'Meara kick).

N—Kamara 26 pass from Obado (Ogogo kick).

N—Westerberg 15 pass from Obado (Ogogo kick).

P—Pannell 11 run (O'Meara kick).

N—Kamara 91 kickoff return (Ogogo kick).

N—Westerberg 35 pass from Obado (Ogogo kick).

P—Mitko 1 run (O'Meara kick).

N—Obado 1 run (Ogogo kick).

P—Shorter 34 pass from Mitko (O'Meara kick).

N—Obado 99 run (Ogogo kick).

P N

First downs 21 11

Rush-Yards 41-149 25-242

Passing Yards 276 161

Comp-Att-Int 14-25-1 10-14-0

Punts-Avg. 2-29.0 1-24.0

Fumbles-Lost 2-1 4-2

Penalty-Yards 3-25 4-25

Sack by-Yards 0-0 2-9

#### INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

##### PRINCETON

Rushing: Javon Pannell 30-142, Alex Mitko 8-9, Eric Shorter 1-3, David Klinges 1-2, team 1-(-7).

Passing: Mitko 13-24-1, 195 yards, TD, Pannell 1-1-0, 81 yards, TD

Receiving: Shorter 9-223, 2 TDs, Liam Helstrom 2-21, Klinges 1-17, Kevin White 1-10, Ben Smallzman 1-5.

##### NOTTINGHAM

Rushing: Esayah Obado 7-157, Wroway Williams 16-86, Tyree Patterson 1-2, Ayoub Kamara 1-(-3).

Passing: Obado 10-14-0, 161 yards, 3 TDs

Receiving: Kamara 4-83, TD, Westerberg 3-61, 2 TDs, Larry Pittman 3-17.

Sacks: McGovern Gabriel ½-7, Jack Andrejck ½-7, team 1-2.

Interception: Troy Scales 2-14.

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