

The Friars (8-2 overall, 5-0 Inter-Ac) intercepted four Springside Chestnut Hill passes in the second half, two of them by senior defensive back/running back Andrew Pellicciotta, the Inter-Ac's Most Valuable Player last fall.

“This win means everything to us – it’s our main goal every season,” said Pellicciotta, who also scored two touchdowns Friday. “To get those five (Inter-Ac) wins, and to allow those five teams only 21 points, that (makes) a statement I think to the league and the state.”

Malvern senior outside linebacker Owen Mears, who returned an interception for a touchdown Friday, said, “It was kind of boring in the secondary tonight (smile); our defensive line did a great job and were in the quarterback’s face all night. I love all those guys. I’m forever in debt to this program – it’s emotional.”

In the scoreless first quarter, Springside Chestnut Hill was the first team to threaten to score. A fumbled punt gave the Blue Devils the ball on the Friars 32-yard line, then Malvern’s defense came up with back-to-back big plays. First, the Friars nailed SCH wide receiver Aaron Clark for an 8 yard loss; then Malvern junior defensive lineman Bernard Blakey sacked Blue Devil quarterback Liam Zelman for a 10-yard loss.

Malvern’s offense began to get rolling early in the second quarter. A Blue Devil punt to midfield was returned by Pellicciotta for 19 yards down to the visitors’ 33-yard line. Five plays later, Pellicciotta scored on a 5-yard run to give the hosts a 7-0 lead. Big plays in the drive was a 13-yard run by Zeke Bates, and a 16-yard pass from Jackson Melconian to running back Danny Riely.

Two minutes later, the Friars scored again. A three-and-out by Springside Chestnut Hill was quickly followed by a 70-yard touchdown run by Pellicciotta on 2nd-and-5.

Malvern took a 13-0 lead into halftime, then received the second half kickoff and marched 69 yards in six plays for a touchdown. The big play was a 48-yard pass completion from Melconian to senior wide receiver P.J. Holmes. Malvern running back Chris Smith scored on a 2-yard run, then Melconian ran it in for a two-point conversion to give the hosts a 21-0 lead with 9:05 to play in the third quarter.

Just five plays later, Malvern scored again. On 4th-and-1 from the Blue Devils 29-yard line, Springside Chestnut Hill set up in punt formation, then threw a pass. The ball wound up in the hands of Owens, who scored a 30-yard touchdown to give the Friars a 28-0 lead.

Mears said, “Coach (Scott) Taylor, our special teams coach, prepared us for (the fake punt) earlier in the week, so all credit to him, I kind of knew that was coming.”

The Friars later intercepted two more passes, one by senior defensive back Zade Johnson in the third quarter, the other by Pellicciotta midway through the fourth quarter. Pellicciotta’s interception brought the ball to midfield, and set up a five-play, 53-yard touchdown drive that was completed by a 20-yard TD run by Riely.