

High Schools

# Conners steps up at QB as Malvern rips La Salle

By Rick O'Brien  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER  
With eight starters back on offense and six on defense, Malvern Prep didn't enter the season with many question marks.

One concern, though, was replacing strong-armed quarterback Ryan Nassib. Last year, Nassib, now at Syracuse, threw for more than 1,200 yards to help the Friars go 9-1 and nail down another Inter-Academic League championship.

Yesterday, in the squad's opener versus La Salle, Billy Conners greatly eased the worries surrounding the loss of Nassib. With his arm and legs, the 5-foot-11, 175-pounder had a hand in five touchdowns as the host Friars crushed the Explorers, 47-21, in a nonleague match-up at Quigley Field.

Conners completed 9 of 11 passes for 185 yards and three touchdowns. The senior added a pair of scores in the second half, on sneaks of 1 and 2 yards.

"I was the backup the last two years," Conners said. "Ryan had a great arm, a lot of talent. I understood the situation. I just tried to learn from him as much as I could."

Over the summer, Conners worked out three times a week on his passing with the aid of teammates Joe Price, Neil Willis, James Connelly and Rob McCabe. Conners was a quarterback at St. Agnes Elementary School in West Chester.

"I thought he did great for his first game," Price said.

Conners connected with Price, a 6-3, 185-pound senior wideout, for back-to-back scores in the first half. Price ran under a pass along the right sideline for a 55-yard TD, then turned an over-the-middle catch into a 45-yard score.

Behind Willis (11 carries for 96 yards, two TDs) and Connelly (16 for 93, one score), Malvern netted 275 yards on



RON CORTES / Inquirer Staff Photographer  
Malvern receiver James Connelly reels in a 26-yard scoring pass in the second quarter as La Salle defender George Giovinazzo goes down. The touchdown gave Malvern a 35-14 lead.



La Salle quarterback Drew Loughery pleads with officials after his scramble ended in a fumble and turnover.

the ground. The offensive line included center Matt Devlin, guards Joe DiTollo and Mike McCorkle, tackles Bobby Fanchisin and Dave Umile, and tight end C.J. Mooney.

La Salle, which had opened the season with a 45-0 non-league romp over Plymouth Whitmarsh, was forced to the air after falling behind, 21-0, in the first 10 minutes.

Junior Drew Loughery hit on 17 of 35 throws for 209 yards and two scores, both to split end Connor Hoffman.

The 17-year-old Conners, who doubles as a cornerback, is headed to Duke to play lacrosse. His father, Bill, played running back for the old Bishop Kenrick, in Norristown, and Villanova.

La Salle	0	14	0	7	—	21
Malvern Prep	21	14	6	6	—	47

MP: Willis 22 run (Tbeil kick)  
MP: Willis 20 run (Tbeil kick)

MP: Price 55 pass from Conners (Tbeil kick)  
LS: Hoffman 22 pass from Loughery (Bennett kick)

MP: Price 45 pass from Conners (Tbeil kick)  
LS: Hoffman 7 pass from Loughery (Bennett kick)

MP: Connelly 26 pass from Conners (Tbeil kick)  
MP: Conners 1 run (kick blocked)

MP: Conners 2 run (pass failed)  
LS: Abdul-Rahman 18 run (Bennett kick)

Contact staff writer Rick O'Brien at 610-313-8019 or robrien@phillynews.com.

## 2008 MP 47 LaSalle 21 article and boxscore

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