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IS THE RIVALRY HISTORY?

BY STEVE SHEPPARD
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The 30th Island Cup game is now history — and the rivalry between Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard may be as well.

"I think it's come to a point in time where we're not going to be able to compete with the Vineyard anymore because of the numbers," Whalers coach Vito Capizzo said this week. "I don't want to be putting our kids in harm's way."

For the last two seasons Nantucket has played in the Mayflower Small division, while Martha's Vineyard remains in the Mayflower Large. The Vineyard listed 46

players on Saturday's roster, while Nantucket has played with fewer than 30 students all year.

Saturday's 42-point margin of victory is the biggest point differential in the history of the series dating back to 1953. Nantucket has won just one game against the Vineyard in the last nine meetings, but still holds a 17-13 edge in Island Cup games, and is 35-23-3 in the 61 meetings of the two teams.

Because the schools play in different divisions, the Island Cup is now a non-league game and has no bearing on post-season play for either school.

Vineyard coach Don Herman addressed the issue after Saturday's 48-6 victory. In response to questions about the Island Cup that included Nantucket's smaller

roster and size Herman said: "I know where you guys are going with this and I don't like it. Things are cyclical. They're a young team and they've got a lot of guys coming back with some significant varsity experience." Herman also pointed to the 24 seniors he'll see graduate this year.

Capizzo did say after the game that "we're going through a bad cycle right now," but added Sunday that the rivalry may have to be reconsidered.

The teams are contracted to play in 2008 — a scheduled home game for Nantucket. ■



Coach Capizzo hurt in third quarter pileup

There was an unsettling moment midway through the third quarter of Saturday's game when Nantucket coach Vito Capizzo was knocked to the ground when a play spilled over the visitors' sideline.

The Vineyard had just scored to go up 42-0. On Nantucket's next offensive series, a pass intended for Jordan Ferreira was intercepted, resulting in a scramble near the Nantucket bench that blindsided Capizzo. He was limping noticeably after the game and said then that he didn't see the play spill across the sideline because he was focused on seeing who had possession of the ball. On Sunday he said he may have sustained some ligament damage.

"I've got to keep my head on a swivel," he said. "I didn't see it coming." ■



MICHAEL GALVIN/The Independent

Vineyard harpoons Whalers, 48-6

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The sun peeked through high clouds and a steady breeze blew toward the Nantucket side of the field. The weather was crisp, but not intolerable. Fans flew or took an early morning boat, and many cars in the Vineyard's high school parking lot were decorated in blue and white. Conditions, all in all, weren't bad for the 61st meeting between the Vineyarders and Whalers.

Both teams entered the game with three straight wins, with the Vineyard's three victories all shutouts. Sporting an 8-2 record, Martha's Vineyard was the clear favorite, but records have often meant little through the years in the annual inter-island affair.

But the Vineyard's size and ability was just too much for the smaller Whaler squad to overcome as the home team rolled to a 48-6 victory.

There was consolation in the game's final minutes. As time ran out on the season, the plucky Whalers mounted one final drive. With their passing game thwarted for most of the contest, junior quarterback Chris Welch connected with Delroy Lawrence for Nantucket's only first down of the second half, bringing the ball to the Vineyard 44 yard line. From there, sophomore running back David Loveberry left nothing to chance as he took the handoff and ran into the end zone for the Whalers only points of the day. With 2:36 remaining, the touchdown was a moral victory, denying the Vineyarders their sixth shutout of the year.

The Island Cup, however, remained on the other island for the fifth straight year and for the ninth time in eleven years.

Nantucket fought valiantly in the game's opening quarter, forcing a

Vineyard fumble during the home team's opening possession. After Chris Getman recovered the football, the Whalers drove to the Vineyard 23-yard line, thanks to a 20-yard pass play from Welch to Lawrence for their first hookup of the day. Nantucket lost the ball on a second down sweep, unfortunately, and the Vineyard drove the other way for the game's first touchdown.

Undaunted, the Whalers bounced back to mount a drive late in the period.

It began when senior linebacker Tomas Smaliorius — who, as he has all season, put in a stellar day on defense — forced a second Vineyard fumble on a quarterback keeper play. Nantucket was stalled on the ensuing offensive series, but a further Vineyard miscue kept the drive alive when the purple team was called for a roughing the kicker call on the fourth down punt.

David Loveberry (11) is off and running to score the Whalers' lone touchdown of the game. Looking to block is Jordan Ferreira (24).

The 15-yard penalty gave the Whalers possession near midfield. Welch went to the air on second down and found Lawrence down the sideline, who made a beautiful one-handed, Randy Moss-like catch to complete the 21-yard pass play.

Nantucket had momentum, just as it had earlier in the quarter when Getman recovered the first Vineyard fumble. That momentum stalled when the ensuing second down, play action pass was intercepted. The quarter ended with the Vineyard in possession of the ball and a 7-0 lead.

Although the Nantucket defense