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BROOKLINE, JAMAICA PLAIN

Brookline-JP Patriots advance to Pop Warner Super Bowl semi-finals

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 6, 2011 10:30 AM

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(Gerardo Mora for Pop Warner)

Patriots including No. 4 Glenn Smith III and No. 12 Kejuan Farguharson put the defensive pressure on Oak Cliff Titans' No. 4 Cartrell Thomas.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Led to victory Sunday by a defense that has yet to surrender a point all season, the Brookline-Jamaica Plain Patriots Jr. Midget team became the state's only youth football squad this year to advance to the semi-finals of the national 55th Pop Warner Super Bowl tournament.

The group of 11- to 13-year-olds from the Boston area will take the field again tomorrow as the competition hosted in Florida continues this week. A win would earn them a chance to play in a championship game that no Division I Massachusetts team, at any of the tournament's four age-weight levels, has won in at least the past quarter century.

Pop Warner's records of title winning teams date back only to 1987. Since then, no team in the state has won a championship while competing at the top, Division I, rank. At the tournament's other rank, Division II, the 2001 Chelsea Red Devils Midget crew is the only Massachusetts team to have won a

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Pop Warner Super Bowl.

Over the weekend, the Brookline-JP Pop Warner program, which fields six age-group teams altogether, had one of its squads [compete in the national tournament for just the second time](#) since it formed in the mid-1990s.

The Patriots Jr. Midget team blanked the Oak Cliff Titans from Texas 22-0 in the first round of the Pop Warner Super Bowl at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex near Orlando, Fla., on Sunday afternoon.

Patriots' scoring highlights from the game, according to Pop Warner officials include: a 33-yard touchdown reception by No. 22 Antonio Ortega; a two-yard touchdown run and a five-yard touchdown catch by No. 4 Glenn Smith III; and a six-yard touchdown run by No. 7 Dexter Cumberlander.

Tomorrow, the team will play the White Oak Warriors from Maryland, who won their opening game 33-0 against the Glenville Titans from Ohio.

The winner of that contest will compete for the Division I Jr. Midget Pop Warner crown on Saturday, when they will square off against the victor of tomorrow's matchup between the Almaden Mustangs from California and the Virginia Beach Mustangs from Virginia.

All six teams in the Brookline-JP program dedicated their seasons to the late Myra H. Kraft, philanthropist and wife of New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, who died from cancer in July.

The Krafts are lifelong Brookline residents, and one of their four sons, Jonathan, helped coach the Brookline-JP Pats for five years before his son, 15-year-old Harry, graduated from the program two years ago. Jonathan Kraft, president of the three-time Super Bowl champion Patriots in Foxborough, [said last week](#) that his mom would frequently attend the Brookline-JP games and loved to watch the children play.

The Jr. Midget team finished the regular season at 7-0, and continued its undefeated streak through the postseason for an overall 12-0 record.

The team's defense has not surrendered a single point all season, including in an 18-0 victory over New Haven to win the regional championship allowing the Patriots to advance to the Pop Warner Super Bowl, Coach Ian Cotterell [said last week](#).

Harry Downes Field in Brookline is home for the Brookline-JP program, which serves children from a number of communities and a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Teams can compete regionally and nationally; the Pop Warner program has 45 other teams in Eastern Massachusetts.

The program has won a regional championship once before. In 2008, players traveled to Florida to compete for the national championship, but the team was eliminated after losing its first game.

The local Pop Warner organization struggled to find success on the field until recent years, when Cotterell helped turn the program around. He joined the Brookline-JP Patriots in 1998 after his son's coach quit.

A native of Mission Hill, he was nominated in January alongside 27 other coaches nationwide – including last season's Super Bowl champ – for a new annual NFL award honoring coaches at all levels of the sport for "integrity, achievement, and leadership."

Three other Massachusetts teams – the Division I East Lynn Bulldogs Midget

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team, the Division II West Lynn Midget crew and the Worcester Vikings Jr. Pee Wee squad – were eliminated in the first round of this year’s Pop Warner Super Bowl.

Of seven other teams beside Brookline-JP from New England in this year’s national tournament, only one, the Division I New Haven Steelers Pee Wee team from Connecticut, advanced to the semi-final round.

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(Gerardo Mora for Pop Warner)

Patriots' No. 4 Glenn Smith III scored two offensive touchdowns during Sunday’s game.

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