Trailing 7-2 midway with 6:42 remaining in Friday's sectional 39 championship game at Milan, West Washington Head Coach Phillip Bowsman looked at his sophomore quarterback Cody Maudlin and made a declaration.

"We're going to drive the ball down and score right here," Bowsman said.

Maudlin nodded, strapped his helmet and then guided the Senators on what proved to be the game winning drive. The drive ended with Maudlin connecting with Matt Brackney on a 13-yard pass and catch.

The PAT (point after touchdown) failed as the Senators went for two looking to stretch their lead to three. Instead, they led 8-7.

It was fitting that Brackney scored the touchdown because he had two fumbles early in the game that ended what looked like for sure WW scoring drives.

"I watched my brother (Luke Brackney) in his senior year play the same team and they trailed by one and came out and got beat bad and we weren't going to let that happen tonight," the younger Brackney said. "Coach (Phillip Bowsman) has preached over-coming adversity and bending but not breaking all season and that's exactly what happened.

"(After fumbling) my quarterback Cody Maudlin told me to keep my head up. I did that and the line made the blocks and I got the ball in the endzone."

Bowsman said that was his message prior to the game.

"I told the kids that in a sectional championship there are always going to be ups and downs," he said. "We just have to find a time to make the play. When Matt fumbled for the second time I told him, 'You will make a play tonight to make a difference in this game and he did that to give us a lead.'"

The momentum of Brackney's score continued to build as Milan fumbled on their next play from scrimmage.

The ball was recovered by Branson Smith and a few plays later, the Senators scored again. This time on a one-yard run by Tyler Dunn.

After a Milan off-sides penalty, West Washington again went for two on the PAT, this time it was the right decision as Dunn again went behind the right side of the offensive line, putting his team up 16-7 with 3:31 remaining.

The play that made that drive a success happened moments earlier with West Washington facing a fourth and 10.

Maudlin found and connected with Tyler Holliday for a first down that kept the drive alive.

West Washington added one more score when the Milan quarterback, trying to score in a hurry, threw an interception to Chad Thompson.

Thompson converted the turnover into points when he returned the ball 54 yards for a touchdown.

Brenden Grimes converted the PAT and the celebration began.

Bowsman said he never worried that his team was going to lose.

"This team is hard-nosed and they never quit," he said. "They have the athletic ability, they have the strength and most importantly, they are mentally tough. Mental toughness is the most

important of those three."

As for the encouraging words he delivered to Maudlin before the start of the game winning drive, Bowsman said it was because of his confidence in his team's play caller.

"Maudlin is only a sophomore in number, because he plays at a junior-senior level," Bowsman said. "He is an amazing young man. He puts the ball on the money and that's what he did on that drive. I have 100 percent confidence in him every time he steps on the field."

Besides turning the ball over three times in the first half, the Senators controlled the first 24 minutes of the game.

After Brackney's first fumble, which happened on the one-yard line when he was about to score, the Senators took the lead on the next play when Robert Chandler tackled the Milan ball carrier in the endzone.

The two-point safety was the only score either team could manage until the start of the second half.

Milan forced West Washington into a three-and-out and then put together a work-man like drive.

The drive ended with an Indian touchdown and PAT that gave them the lead 7-2 with 4:34 remaining in the third quarter.

Milan caught everyone off guard on the ensuing kick-off as they recovered an on-side kick.

This time, however, the Senator D responded.

West Washington forced and recovered a fumble and while they didn't score on the next possession, they seemed to stop the MHS momentum.

The win is West Washington's first sectional title since 1994 and the third in school history.

Ironically, 1994 was the same year Bowsman helped Salem win their only sectional as a player.

He said of the two, he thinks the one as a coach means more.

"Winning a sectional is an amazing feeling as a player," Bowsman said. "As a coach, you get to see all the work that goes into it in every area. You see the hard work and the desire and the team unity and there is nothing like it.

"The desire and the never-quit attitude that these guys have makes it very special as a coach and I love to see them get to celebrate."

Since losing to Paoli, West Washington has won seven games in a row and will likely face their toughest test this Friday when the number-one ranked Linton-Stockton comes to Campbellsburg.

Linton boast one of the state's top offenses, while West Washington has a top-10 defense.

Linton is 2-0 in the last 15 years against WW, including a 20-8 win in 2008.

Friday's regional championship game is scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. Friday.