

By Ben Destefan

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: Greencastle-Antrim faces tough test at Milton Hershey on Saturday

Things don't exactly get any easier.

Coming off a 20-0 loss to open the season against Chambersburg, Greencastle-Antrim now faces one of its toughest tests on the schedule, making the trip to Milton Hershey for a rare afternoon game this Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

Having qualified for the District 3 playoffs last fall, the Spartans are loaded with athleticism, presenting challenges for opponents across the field. Like G-A, Milton Hershey also dropped its opener, falling to CD East by a final of 19-13.

"They're fast with plenty of athletes," Blue Devil head coach Chuck Tinninis said. "They don't have the size advantage up front against us like Chambersburg did, but they play very aggressively. They also return a lot of guys from their playoff team last year, so it's certainly going to be a test for us."

Headlining the list is Milton Hershey quarterback Keonte Lucas. Known as a versatile threat, Lucas has rushed for more than 1,000 yards in each of the last two seasons by utilizing his legs as much as his arm. Against CD East, Lucas ran for 70 yards on 13 carries to lead the team in both categories.

"Their quarterback is a very unique talent," Tinninis said of the senior signal caller. "On film, he accelerates so quickly. Our main focus has to be to at least contain him, slow him down. He's still going to get some yards, but we have to limit how much of an impact he has running the ball."

A defensive effort similar to last week could keep the Blue Devils within striking distance. Despite the loss, G-A only surrendered 13 points when the defense was on the field, showcasing the ability to bend but not break.

Twice backed up deep in the first half, the Blue Devils held to force field goals, maintaining a slim 6-0 deficit until Chambersburg returned a fumbled punt for a touchdown with 31 seconds remaining in the third quarter. While that turnover served as the dagger, it also inflated a final score that didn't truly represent G-A's performance defensively.

In contrast, the goose egg pretty much summed up the Blue Devils' night with the ball.

Greencastle managed just 181 yards of total offense, struggling to sustain drives against a stout Chambersburg front with a distinct size advantage. Still, the Blue Devils will need to find balance between the run and pass in order to keep defenses honest. Unfortunately, they'll have to do so on Saturday without starting running back Demetrius Burton, who is suspended one game after being ejected in the fourth quarter last week.

"We need to get our offense going, there's no doubt about that," Tinninis said. "Last week we'd grind away and grind away, but we just couldn't break through and get over the hump. We're working on some things that focusing on improving every week."

Although not having Burton available, Tinninis is still confident in his contingent of ball carriers including Kyrin Zimmerman, Caleb Schaeffer, Tanner Bain and Isaiah Peck, who will start at running back. Quarterback Cade McDowell also displayed flashes of his dual-threat abilities, scrambling for 42 yards on six carries in the opener.

Considering the unique circumstances of playing on Saturday, G-A will have an extra day of preparation for the Spartans.

"We changed our practice schedule around a little bit," Tinninis said. "I'm curious to see how our guys respond to a Saturday afternoon game. We should be better rested and we're hoping to come out ready to go."

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