

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: Greencastle-Antrim looks for first win at West Perry

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By Ben Destefan

Last week was a noticeable improvement. Now, can such progress translate into a win?

Sitting at 0-3, Greencastle-Antrim opens Mid-Penn Colonial Division play on the road at West Perry Friday night, entering as the presumed favorite against a struggling program.

Coming off an 0-10 campaign a year ago, the Mustangs have been outscored 109-20 in their first three games to extend the losing streak. All things considered, the Blue Devils are staring at a prime opportunity to get in the win column.

"We showed a lot of progress, now we need to learn how to finish," G-A head coach Chuck Tinninis said after last Friday's 28-16 loss to East Pennsboro. "Our kids have a lot of heart, a lot of class and they just want to get better."

Against the Panthers, they did. Following two lackluster performances in losses to Chambersburg and Milton Hershey, G-A put together an inspired effort at Kaley Field, demanding East Pennsboro's attention from start to finish.

The biggest takeaway was the Blue Devils' ability to move the ball, something they had struggled with out of the gate. Greencastle totaled 328 yards of offense, more than it had in the first two weeks combined. Additionally, after surrendering a fourth-quarter touchdown, the Blue Devils responded with a quick score to make it a one-possession game late. Again, while still occurring in defeat, last Friday's performance was a night-and-day difference.

Having Demetrius Burton on the field certainly helped the cause, as the junior running back rushed for 103 yards and a touchdown while also taking a screen pass 23 yards to the house. After serving a one-game suspension against Milton Hershey, Burton's versatility was a significant factor in the Blue Devils being able to hang around with the unbeaten Panthers (3-0). Burton has also had prior success against West Perry, rushing for 113 yards and a pair of touchdowns in G-A's 56-21 victory last fall.

"Burton is a spark for us," Tinninis said. "He's a stud and allows us to get things going on offense. Then when we get some completions in there, that's huge. We're looking for improvement each week and the kids are working hard."

Blue Devil quarterback Cade McDowell seemed to gain confidence as the game went on, utilizing his legs for 67 yards on 13 carries. The likes of Caleb Schaeffer, Kyrin Zimmerman and Tanner Bain have been consistently in the mix as well, splitting G-A's run-heavy workload.

Defensively, the Blue Devils will need to account for West Perry's do-it-all Cameron May, who has stats for receiving, rushing and passing through the first three weeks. During last Friday's 35-6 loss to Middletown, several Mustangs formed a ball-carrier-by-committee, including Terrance Quaker, Kenyon Johnson and of course, May.

Still, if G-A can replicate its performance against East Penn, the Blue Devils should like their chances.