

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

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By Ben Destefan

ELLIOTTSBURG — It's a win. And ultimately, that's the only thing that matters.

Following an 0-3 start, Greencastle-Antrim ended its early-season slide Friday night at West Perry, overcoming a shaky first half en route to a 35-21 Mid-Penn Colonial Division victory.

Demetrius Burton rushed for 163 yards and a touchdown while quarterback Cade McDowell accounted for three total scores, headlining the Blue Devils' best offensive performance to date.

"We persevered and finished tonight," G-A head coach Chuck Tinninis said. "We're not there yet, but we got a win and we're going to enjoy it before getting back to work next week."

Despite turning the ball over three times in the first half, Greencastle (1-3, 1-0 MPC-Colonial) led 21-14 at the break before putting the game away with 14 fourth-quarter points.

Perhaps the decisive sequence occurred after West Perry (0-4) capitalized on G-A's third lost fumble to tie things at 14 late in the second quarter. Receiving the ensuing kickoff, Austin Kane found a seam up the middle and broke loose for an 88-yard trip to paydirt, immediately providing the Blue Devils with an answer.

"We made it interesting with the turnovers," Tinninis said. "But I thought our defense stepped up after being put in some tough spots, and that kickoff return was huge to give us the lead back at halftime."

A scoreless third quarter gave way to a points-filled fourth, sparked by McDowell taking a keeper 28 yards to the end zone for a 28-14 G-A lead with 9:26 remaining.

The Mustangs needed all of four plays to respond, as two nice completions set up an 8-yard rushing score by West Perry quarterback Dom Salinetto to again make it a one-possession game.

Starting at their own 40 with a little more than eight minutes to go, the Blue Devils put together arguably their best drive of the season to seal the win. While continuing to feed Burton, G-A showcased balance with McDowell hitting Cade Marshall for 19 yards to the West Perry 6. After a pair of runs placed the ball at the 1, a personal foul penalty made it third-and-goal from the 16. Unfazed, McDowell delivered a beautiful pass to Marshall down the right side, connecting in stride for the 35-21 cushion with 3:42 on the clock.

"Aside from the fumbles, we did some nice things offensively tonight," Tinninis said. "In the second half I thought our line took over and allowed us to grind it out and run the ball. We also got the passing game going a little bit with some longer completions, which is something we want to build on moving forward."

Prior to the fumbles, the Blue Devils were having their way early on as McDowell capped a strong opening drive with a 4-yard burst across the goal line for a 7-0 advantage.

Despite coughing the ball up on its next two possessions, G-A's defense stood tall, blocking a field goal ahead of Jacob Hockman intercepting a pass to end West Perry's second threat deep in Blue Devil territory.

Taking over at the 11, Burton ripped off a trio of nice gains before catching another gear on his 45-yard touchdown run, simply outracing defenders to give G-A a 14-0 lead.

Finding success through the air, West Perry marched to the Blue Devil 20 on a pair of completions from Salinetto to Cameron May. Following a penalty, Salinetto found a wide-open Joey Reisinger for a 25-yard scoring strike to cut the deficit to 14-6.

Greencastle then botched the short kickoff, handing possession right back to the Mustangs. West Perry took advantage as Salinetto lofted a pass to May along the left sideline, allowing the senior standout to reel in the grab for a 29-yard touchdown, drawing the Mustangs even following a two-point conversion.

Needing to regain command, Kane's highlight-reel return provided the necessary shift, sending the Blue Devils to the locker room with a lead they would not relinquish.

G-A returns to action next Friday when the Blue Devils host Mifflin County for Homecoming.

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