

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: Mifflin County pulls away from Greencastle-Antrim

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By Ben Destefan

GREENCASTLE — The visitors decided to have a celebration of their own.

Making its first-ever appearance at Kaley Field, Mifflin County spoiled Greencastle-Antrim's Homecoming festivities Friday night, wearing down the Blue Devils en route to a 36-17 Mid-Penn Colonial Division victory.

Leading just 14-10 at halftime, the Huskies (2-3, 2-0 MPC-Colonial) pulled away by scoring 22 straight points to put the game out of reach before a late G-A touchdown cut into the final deficit.

"We just got worn down," Blue Devil head coach Chuck Tinninis said. "I thought our kids battled hard, but we couldn't get anything going in the second half."

G-A (1-4, 1-1 MPC-Colonial) turned the ball over three times while struggling to sustain offense against Mifflin's big bodies up front. Starting quarterback Cade McDowell was also treated for a concussion, bringing on backup Kyrin Zimmerman for the entire second half.

"We really got limited with what we could do offensively," Tinninis said. "McDowell had a concussion so we had to go to our second string, which forced us to lean even more on the run. We were having a hard time running inside, especially with the size advantage they had on us."

Things looked promising early on, as the Blue Devils put together a great opening drive for a 7-0 lead. Healthy gains by Tanner Bain and Zimmerman moved the ball deep into Mifflin territory before McDowell took a keeper 2 yards to pay dirt with 6:20 remaining in the first.

The momentum would be short-lived, however, as the Huskies put 14 unanswered on the board prior to the quarter ending. A 30-yard completion from Drew Williams to Malik Sechler set up Mifflin's first score ahead of a Blue Devil fumble returning possession to the Huskies at the G-A 19.

Mifflin needed all of two plays to capitalize, capped by Cole Baker's 10-yard rumble to the end zone for a 14-7 advantage.

Greencastle appeared poised to respond midway through the second before a Cole Peachey interception halted the drive. After forcing the Huskies to punt, Ian Gelsinger drilled a 24-yard field goal as time expired, sending the Blue Devils to the locker room trailing 14-10.

A sensational interception by G-A's Antwoine Carter opened the second half, only to have the offense go three-and-out. Following the punt, Baker broke loose for 51 yards to abruptly flip the field before a 19-yard completion from Williams to Isaac Marclay placed the ball at the 4. Marclay handled the rest, barreling across the goal line while also catching the two-point conversion for a 22-10 cushion.

With the Blue Devils unable to get anything going, the Huskies officially seized control five minutes later on a 1-yard rushing score by Williams, pushing the margin to 29-10.

G-A's third turnover of the night ensued, allowing Mifflin to deliver the dagger beginning from its own 40. Continuing to grind out yards on the ground, Marclay capped the drive with his second touchdown to make it 36-10 with 9:31 remaining.

Trying to finish strong, the Blue Devils did end on a positive note as a 16-yard gain by Austin Kane set up Zimmerman for a 1-yard plunge, resulting in the 36-17 final.

"Mifflin is a pretty solid team, so you have to give them credit," Tinninis said. "The turnovers hurt and things just got away from us in the second half. We have to watch the film, see what we can do better and get back to work."

G-A's leading rusher Demetrius Burton was limited to 52 yards while Bain finished with a team-high 59. Baker paced Mifflin with 70 yards on just four carries.

The Blue Devils return to action next Friday at Big Spring.