

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: Waynesboro, Greencastle-Antrim set to renew rivalry

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Do you know what they say about rivalry games? It's true. Throw away the records.

When Greencastle-Antrim (1-6) visits Buchanan Automotive Stadium to take on Waynesboro (4-3) Friday night, the truth is, it'll be like both teams are 0-0. New week, new game, new challenges, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

In fact, the pressure will be squarely on the Indians to keep a good thing going, while the Blue Devils are in rebuilding mode for 2017.

Waynesboro has won three consecutive games, including a 35-7 whitewashing of previously 5-1 Big Spring. The Indians are tied with Mifflin County at 3-1 in the Mid-Penn Colonial Division, a game behind Shippensburg. The Greyhounds beat the Indians 24-21 on Sept. 23, but there are no tiebreakers when determining a division champion. If Waynesboro wins out and Shippensburg stumbles in one of its final three games, then, like 2014, there will be a co-champion.

"This is always a big game for us," said Waynesboro coach Steve Myers, whose squad has won the last two meetings. "I just told them Monday that they're record is not great, but if there's any team they'd like to knock off, it's us. We need to stay strong, do what we're doing."

For Waynesboro, it's been running the football proficiently — led by senior running back Brady Beckner and backed up by fullback Forrest Rhyne and running back Mason Frampton. Beckner is closing in on 1,000 yards, and if he runs for his average, he'll get it this Friday. Averaging 129.1 yards a game, Beckner is sitting at 904 yards for the season.

Good thing the Tribe is hitting its stride on the ground, because Friday's forecast is calling for rain. Three weeks ago, Waynesboro beat Northern York 13-0 in the rain, a game that saw quarterback Brady Riddell throw the ball only five times.

"When we go out there, we want to be a physical team," Myers said. "You could see that last Friday. We were flying around and getting big hits. We want to play clean, not turn the ball over and clean up the penalties."

Respect for an opponent is a good thing, especially when it's the closest in proximity to any team Waynesboro plays.

The scouting report on G-A gives Myers some cause for concern.

"They run the ball well — they have their bread and butter stuff, and they do it well," Myers said. "We need to take away their plays they want to hit. (Quarterback) Cade McDowell is a good runner. We have to be disciplined and do our jobs.

"(Defensively) they play a similar defense as Big Spring. They have some good D linemen and linebackers. They will be physical. A couple of plays we run we'll be interested in how they respond to, and adjust to that."

Blue Devil head coach Chuck Tinninis reiterated the physical expectations of this backyard rivalry.

"We're planning on a four-quarter fist fight," Tinninis said. "We both want to play physical, hard-nosed football. Add in it's Waynesboro/Greencastle, and it's ramped up even more."

Certainly, while Friday's opponent provides more than enough motivation, G-A must focus on correcting mistakes while building off last week's effort.

Ultimately, the Blue Devils were shut out by unbeaten Shippensburg, failing to find the end zone during a 27-0 loss. Still, two costly turnovers deep in Greyhound territory significantly impacted the first half, transforming what could have been a tie game into a two-score deficit at the break.

"I was pleased with how we played hard for four quarters last week, and we expect that same type of effort and emotion," Tinninis said. "We just have to correct mistakes, like not putting the ball on the ground and finishing drives. There was still a lot that I liked, and I thought the offensive line played one of its best games of the year."

Demetrius Burton has headlined G-A's run-heavy approach, with the versatile junior eclipsing 100 yards in four of six games he's played. Against the Greyhounds, Burton rushed for 132 yards to push his season total to 625.

The lingering problem has been the Blue Devils' lack of balance, passing for a combined 21 yards in the last two games, allowing defenses to key on the run.

"We need to find a way to throw the ball better and keep drives alive," Tinninis said. "Last week we had four nice drives going that all stalled in their territory, whether with the fumbles or not getting first downs."

Considering Tinninis sees several similarities between Waynesboro and Shippensburg, G-A must continue making strides if the Blue Devils hope to get back on track.

"They're a well-coached team led by seniors on both sides of the ball," Tinninis said of the Indians. "They're similar to Ship in a lot of ways and I'm impressed with what I've seen from them on film. It's going to be another big challenge for us, but this is what high school football is all about."

