

# Avon Grove 'D' comes up big in 13-0 win over Kennett

By Brad Spahr, Sports Reporter

In practice leading up to its Week 1 non-league showdown with neighboring Kennett, the Avon Grove High School football team spent a good portion of its time preparing to face an offensive style that it isn't accustomed to playing against on a regular basis. That is Kennett's no-huddle, spread offense that uses multiple receiver sets.

"They run a unique offense," said Avon Grove head coach Marvin Dooley. "That five-wide is tough to defend, and it's something that we probably won't see the rest of the season."

As it turned out, Avon Grove had no problem slowing Kennett's fast-paced attack, and a little help from Mother Nature certainly didn't hurt as the sky opened up right before kick-off and most of the game was played in a steady rain.

Avon Grove limited visiting Kennett to just 135 yards of total offense last Friday night and harassed Blue Demons quarterback Ben Petrak into a 4-of-27 passing night, including three interceptions, on its way to an impressive 13-0 shutout.

"Avon Grove is probably one of the best teams we are going to face on our schedule this season," said Kennett head coach Jim Donato. "They are very good defensively. They were stacking the box on us with eight or nine guys. We had to go to the air, but unfortunately for Ben it was like chucking water balloons out there."

Avon Grove, meanwhile, rushed for 231 yards on the ground behind a balanced attack that was led by junior quarterback Kyle Kush (85 yards, one touchdown), and running backs Ren Hoilman (65 yards, one touchdown) and Ryan Ayers (68 yards).

The Red Devils scored on their first drive of the game after stopping Kennett. Avon Grove marched 69 yards on 11 running plays. The drive was capped by a 6-yard touchdown run by Hoilman to make it 6-0.

The home team struck again early in the second quarter as Kush went in from one yard out to up the Avon Grove lead to 13-0. The scoring drive was set up after Kush hit Hoilman on a 21-yard pass play.

"Our first drive was excel-lent-picture perfect," said Dooley. "We had another good one but then the rest of the night we had a bunch of drives that just stalled on us. We'll take a look at it on film, because the film doesn't lie, and I'm sure we'll find a lot of stuff that we need to fix."

Kennett (0-1 overall) played very well on defense for nearly three quarters following Avon Grove's two scoring drives, limiting the Red Devils to only 100 yards of offense the rest of the way.

The Blue Demons had a chance to make the game real interesting in the third quarter after Shawn Jones recovered a fumble at the Avon Grove 30 yardline. One play later, the Demons were down to the 10 after Petrak connected with Ty Rochester on a 20-yard pass. However, things went sour for Kennett on the very next play as Petrak's screen pass was tipped by Sam Benson and intercepted by defensive back Jordan Harris, who proceeded to sprint 88 yards down the sideline for an apparent score. The touchdown, however, was negated due to an Avon Grove penalty but the damage had been done as Kennett's scoring threat was squashed.

"We had that play, and a couple of other interceptions that we dropped. If we [caught] those, the score would've been a lot different," said Harris, who picked off two balls on the night. "We played real solid on defense though for the first game, and it's definitely a little extra special beating Kennett in our opener. Now we get Oxford next week."

The game between Kennett and Avon Grove was just the second meeting ever for the neighboring schools, which are both still relatively new to the football scene.

"They were talking trash all over the place coming into the game," said Avon Grove defensive captain Wes Shoap, a middle linebacker. "That was fun motivation to hear them run their mouths. We came out and played with amazing intensity tonight and to get a shutout is a great way to start the season."