

# Southern Chester County Sports

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

## Last-minute field goal propels Kennett past Oxford

By Steve Hoffman  
Staff Writer

The Kennett Blue Demons earned a thrilling 30-28 victory over the Oxford Hornets with a 27-yard field goal by David Dice with 13 seconds left to play last Friday afternoon.

The game was scoreless for the first sixteen minutes of play, but after that the teams put on a spectacular display of action-packed football, with momentum shifting from one team to the other throughout.

With Josh Warren and Ben Petrak sharing the quarterbacking duties for Kennett, the Blue Demons were able to continue their offensive resurgence that started the previous week against St. George's Tech. It was Warren who connected with Blake Davenport on a 44-yard scoring strike to give the Blue Demons a 7-0 lead.

Oxford quarterback Giovanni Cruz engineered a 45-yard scoring drive that allowed the Hornets to pull to within a point when the extra point failed. This was just the start of a frenzied final two minutes of first half action. Oxford's Gabe

Yuille plucked a tipped pass out of the air and returned it 70 yards for a touchdown. Cruz converted on a two-point play, making it 14-7 with just 26 seconds left to play in the first half. But Kennett wasn't

content to head to the locker room just yet. A beautiful return by Ty Rochester put the Blue Demons within striking distance with 15 seconds still on the clock. Warren tossed a second touchdown pass

and the extra point tied the game as the half expired.

The break in the action did little to cool the teams' offenses off. Oxford drove 71 yards on the

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The Hornets' ground game was able to gain big yards (above) but Ben Petrak (right) and the Blue Demons fought back. Photos (8) by Steve Hoffman



Oxford tacklers flock to the ball (left), Giovanni Cruz (center) looks to pass, and Nick Martino (right) makes a big play.



Although Oxford's offense generated a lot of yards and put 28 points on the board, Kennett's defense worked hard all afternoon.

## Harris scores three to lead the Red Devils Avon Grove defeats West Chester East, 42-24

By Steve Hoffman  
Staff Writer

Avon Grove's offense responded to every challenge last Friday night, posting four touchdowns in the second half as the Red Devils downed the Vikings of West Chester East, 42-24.

Jordan Harris ran for 120 yards and three scores to lead a balanced offensive attack.

The Vikings' offense could be summed up this way: Chris McCormick.

The talented West Chester East running back ran for 200 yards and was unstoppable at times, matching Harris touchdown-for-touchdown.

Avon Grove was happy to be back in the friendly confines of their home stadium after three tough road games in a row. The Red Devils were 2-0 when they last played on the home field, but returned with a 2-3 record and a strong desire to get back on the winning track.

Avon Grove gave the large home crowd something to cheer about early. Defenders Mike

Esposito, Wes Shoap, and Sam Benson constantly pressured the opposing QB. West Chester East had little success on offense early on. Avon Grove's offense put together a nice drive late in the first quarter, traveling 45 yards on ten plays. Running back Ryan Ayers had a nice 14-yard gain and quarterback Kyle Kush threw a nice slant pass to Aaron Keinema to set up Harris for the first touchdown.

It didn't take East long to retaliate. McCormick raced 33 yards for his first score of the game, a surprisingly big play because the Red Devils' defense seemed to be in control of the game.

It was the start of a pattern: Avon Grove held West Chester East's offense mostly in check until McCormick would manage to pull off a big play to keep his team close.

The Red Devils took the lead again late in the second quarter. They were facing a fourth-and-long and lined up to punt. But the Red Devils' coaching staff opted to gamble

a little. Versatile running back Ren Hoilman took the snap and raced through a gaping hole in the Vikings' line. He was off to the races and didn't stop until he reached the end zone. Kicker Tyler Wilkinson knocked through the extra point to make it 14-7.

Avon Grove scored again on its first drive of the third quarter. The big play was a 40-yard run by Harris, who demonstrated his superior athletic ability by initially hitting a wall of players only to keep bouncing to the left until he found running room then out-running everyone to the end zone.

Considering how Avon Grove was playing defensively, a two-touchdown lead seemed safe. But McCormick, like a bolt of lightning, struck again. One minute the Vikings were backed up, the next minute McCormick was racing down the sideline for a 76-yard score.

The Red Devils went three-and-out, opening the door for McCormick again. He came close to tying the score, break-

ing through the Red Devils' defense on his way to a 43-yard gain. He was stopped at the five and the defense made a big stand right there. The Vikings settled for a field goal, cutting the lead to 21-17.

The Red Devils' offensive line sprang Harris for a 25-yard gain, setting the stage for a touchdown toss from Kush to Keinema.

A few minutes later, it was Avon Grove's turn for a big play: Brendan McGlaughlin exploded for a 78-yard touchdown run that made it 35-17.

But like the killer in a by-the-numbers horror movie, West Chester East rose up for one final scare. McCormick answered McGlaughlin's 78-yarder with a dazzling 78-yard kickoff return.

It was 35-24 with six minutes to play. Ordinarily, that's a comfortable position for the team with the lead and the ball, but McCormick was so dangerous on this night that no lead seemed safe.

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Photos (2) by Steve Hoffman

Avon Grove's defense pressured the quarterback all night (above). This participant in the halftime show waits for her turn to entertain the crowd.





# Sports

## Avon Grove defeats West Chester...

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West Chester East attempted an onside kick, but Geoff Melendez fielded the ball cleanly and gave Avon Grove possession near midfield. Good runs by Harris and Brandon Monk moved the ball downfield. Harris finished up the drive with his third score of the game. Finally, the fight was taken out of West Chester East. The 42-24 lead was a safe one.

After the game, the Red Devils serenaded their head coach, Marvin Dooley, who was about to celebrate his birthday. The real gift, however, was the victory.

"It feels really good to win again," said a visibly relieved Dooley. "We put so much hard work into this. We lost those three games, but I don't think we played that bad. After three losses, you start worrying about morale. These kids needed this tonight."

Dooley commented on the impressive work turned in by the offensive line.

"The offensive line doesn't get any credit but you can't run for more than three hundred yards unless those guys do the job. I'm proud of my offense. Every time we had to respond, they did."



Photos (9) by Steve Hoffman

The large crowd welcomed the Red Devils football team back home after a few weeks on the road. A halftime show by the Avon Grove Marching Band was appreciated by all.

The coach also noted that every game in the rugged Ches-Mont League is a difficult one.

"We never have a week off," he said. "West Chester East is not a slouch team. They played us hard."

That's good preparation for next week, when the Red Devils will host Downingtown West, who looked like the tyrants of the league until losing to West Chester Henderson this week.

The contest, Avon Grove's Homecoming game, will take place on Saturday at 1 p.m.

"Downingtown West is bigger, faster, and stronger," said Dooley, "but we're going to prepare and we're going to be ready."



Avon Grove's offense answered the challenge last Friday night, scoring 42 points—a season high.



Kyle Kush gets taken down after picking up enough yards for a first down.



Avon Grove controlled much of the game (left and center) but West Chester East relied on big plays to keep it close. The Avon Grove halftime show (right) entertained the large home crowd.

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