

Avon Grove suffers its first loss of the season

Unionville used a big third quarter to beat the Devils, 39-13.

By Brad Spahr, Sports Reporter

The Unionville and Avon Grove High School football teams entered their Week 3 showdown last Saturday night on different paths. Avon Grove was riding high after opening its season with two straight convincing victories. In starting 2-0 overall, the Red Devils outscored Kennett and Oxford by a combined margin of 50-7.

Unionville, on the other hand, was still stinging from the way it played in a turnover-filled 27-12 upset loss at Bishop Shanahan the week before, which was just the Indians' third regular season defeat since 2004.

Well, the mood surrounding both clubs certainly changed in a hurry on Saturday night.

Unionville looked nothing like the team that struggled the week before, as the host Indians used a dominant second half performance to blow past Avon Grove by a score of 39-13 at Unionville High School.

"We got beat last week by Shanahan," said Unionville head coach Pat Clark. "But the best part about it was that our kids were real excited to get back out on the field."

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"Avon Grove is a good football team, and they came in undefeated. We knew we needed to execute much better than we did against Shanahan, and our execution in every phase of the game improved dramatically. This was a big win for us to bounce back the way we did."

Unionville rushed for a whopping 354 yards against a good Avon Grove defense. Quarterback Connor Gades led the way with 173 yards on just eight carries, four of which went for touchdowns. Running back Greg Carroll joined in on the fun, as the junior standout rushed for 142 yards on 15 carries and scored on runs of 77 and 22 yards.

It was anybody's game at halftime, with Unionville clinging to just a 19-13 advantage.

However, the Indians delivered the knockout punch in the third quarter and before Avon Grove could blink, they were out of it.

Unionville scored on its first possession of the second half as Gades rumbled 42 yards to pay-dirt on a keeper to up the score to 26-13. Avon Grove quarterback Kyle Kush was then intercepted by Ronnie Brittingham on the ensuing drive, and Brittingham returned the ball to the Devils' 15-yard line. Gades quickly scored again on a 15-yard run, and just like that it was 33-13 Unionville.

"We really took over in the second half," said Clark. "I was very pleased with the way we played."

Carroll added another Unionville score in the third quarter, this time on a 22-yard run to put the game well away. Carroll's first TD was much bigger, though, as it helped shift momentum Unionville's way going into the locker rooms at the break.

Avon Grove, after falling behind 12-0, rallied in the second quarter. Brendan McLaughlin recovered a Unionville fumble deep in its own end, picked it up, and ran five yards for a touch-down. On their next drive, Kush hooked up with receiver Jordan Harris on a 77-yard scoring pass. But right after that, Unionville answered as Carroll went 71 yards to the house to give the Indians a 19-13 lead at the break.

"That was big. It gave us all the momentum," said Clark. "I thought we saw growth out of a lot of our kids, and our defensive line I thought really controlled the game."