

# Avon Grove falls to Downingtown East, 28-10

By Dave Zeitlin; Special to the sun

In the very first quarter of the very first game, Downingtown East football player Max Narewski approached teammate Trey Lauletta with some startling news. "Casey [Roche] just broke his collarbone," Lauletta remembers Narewski telling him. "You're in."

At that point, Lauletta didn't have time to be nervous. He didn't even have time to think. He just grabbed his helmet, threw a few passes and jogged into the game.

Today, four weeks removed from Roche's season-ending injury, Lauletta is still the Cougars' starting quarterback and proving to be quite a fine one at that.

On Friday night, Lauletta shredded the Avon Grove defense for 286 yards and two touchdowns to lead Downingtown East to a 28-10 win at Kottmeyer Stadium, the Cougars' second straight Ches-Mont victory after dropping three straight non-league contests to start the season.

"Oh my goodness, he has unbelievable poise," Downingtown East head coach Mike Matta said. "He's only 15. He can get bigger. He can get stronger. But the thing he has above anything else is just the poise. His confidence in the huddle and his command of the offense. It's amazing for a 15-year-old to have that kind of poise."

"We knew coming in we had to rattle his cage but we couldn't rattle him," Avon Grove coach Marvin Dooley lamented. "We hit him a few times and he hung in there. He impressed me."

The first time he got his hands on the ball, Lauletta orchestrated a five-play, 57-yard scoring drive that was capped by a eight-yard run from Zach Kirby (24 carries, 83 yards).

Then, on the second play of the second quarter, the sophomore showcased his strong arm, launching a pass over the middle of the field to wide open tight end Tyler Kroft for an 80-yard score. The Red Devils blew their coverage on that play, but Lauletta was still concerned that his lanky tight end wouldn't make it to the end zone first.

"I was worried the whole time," Lauletta said, smiling. "He's fast. He's not as fast as the other guys, let's just say that."

The Cougars had little to worry about after Kroft's touch-down, however. After taking a commanding 14-0 lead into the halftime break, Downingtown East did enough to survive a sloppy second half and improve to 2-0 in the league and 2-3 overall.

Despite losing two fumbles in their own territory in the third quarter, the Cougars limited Avon Grove (0-2 league, 2-3 overall) to just a field goal and a 44-yard TD run from Jordan Harris.

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For the game, the Red Devils amassed 185 yards, and just 26 through the air.

"That's the best defensively we've played," Matta said.

Harris, however, was a bright spot for the Avon Grove offense, running for 143 yards on just 12 carries-not a bad total for the team's No. 1 receiver.

"That's the first time he's ever played the 2-back position," Dooley said. "We put him back there to make something happen, and he did a heck of a job. He can run."

But in the end, the Cougars' swarming defense, Lauletta's poise and, perhaps, most importantly, a healthy arsenal of receivers was more than enough to counteract Harris' one-man show.

Kroft led the way with seven receptions for 169 yards, but three other Cougars caught passes. Standout receiver Mike Thurm finished with five catches for 32 yards, gladly giving way to his teammates when the Red Devils paid a lot of attention to him.

"We really used all of our weapons tonight," Lauletta said. "I hope other teams realize we have more than Mike Thurm."

Other teams should also realize the Cougars have a very good quarterback.

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