

Red Devils shock Henderson

By NEIL GEOGHEGAN, Staff Writer

WEST CHESTER — The Avon Grove High School football squad picked an odd time during an unlikely season to notch one of the biggest victories in the program's six-year existence.

The Red Devils traveled to Dicks Stadium on Friday evening and put a big damper on Homecoming festivities with a shocking 17-14 victory over host West Chester Henderson in a Ches-Mont National Division clash.

"This is the first time we've even beaten West Chester Henderson in school history," said elated Avon Grove head coach Marvin Dooley. "It's something we can build on. And once you beat one (Ches-Mont power), you prove to yourself that you can do it and hopefully we'll be able to play with Coatesville and the Downingtown and the West Chester schools."

The Red Devils improve to 2-3 in league play, 4-5 overall, and handed the Warriors (3-2, 5-4) their third consecutive defeat, extinguishing their playoff hopes along the way.

"If I knew what the problem was, I would fix it," said Henderson head coach Joe Walsh.

"We came into this game much better than a 3-5 football team," Dooley explained. "We just

play in a good conference. We've been in a lot of games and I give our kids all the credit. They didn't quit. They really have nothing to play for, but to keep practicing the way they are, to keep trying to get better and then to beat a team like Henderson — they are a good football team."

Junior running back Jordan Harris rolled up 122 rushing yards on 20 carries to pace Avon Grove. Harris single-handedly put the Red Devils in front on the game's first possession and they never looked back. Lined up to punt, Harris scampered for 31 impromptu yards when a poor snap nearly led to a block. Harris then followed it up with three more runs, totaling 19 yards, including a 1-yard touchdown plunge.

"Harris is a heck of an athlete," Dooley said. "He was a wide receiver early in the year, but we put him in the backfield in our fifth game so we could get the ball in his hands. He was only touching the ball three times a game and he needs it touch it 20 times a game. He's a game breaker."

Henderson's Kevin Mann scored the first of his two TDs early in the second quarter, but Avon Grove took a 14-6 lead into the intermission thanks to a 33-yard scoring burst by Brandon Monk. The Devils turned a Warrior fumble into a 30-yard field goal by Tyler Wilkinson in the third quarter and then held on.

"We just made too many mistakes and dug ourselves a hole," Walsh said. "We hurt ourselves too much. But give Avon Grove all the credit. They capitalized on our mistakes and they played mistake-free, which they hadn't done up until this point."

The Devils were outgained by 60 yards, notched six fewer first downs and completed just one pass on the evening. And yet they were the ones celebrating at the end. "I'm just so proud of my boys," Dooley said.

Avon Grove 17, West Chester Henderson 14

Avon Grove 7 7 3 0 - 17

W.C. Henderson 0 6 0 8 - 14

Scoring

AG - Harris 1 run (Wilkinson kick)

WCH - Mann 2 run (kick blocked)

AG - Monk 33 run (Wilkinson kick)

WCH - Mann 1 run (LaFate run)

Team Totals

AG WCH

First downs 10 16

Yards rushing 210 165

Yards passing 5 110

Total yards 215 275

Passing 1-9-0-0 5-15-0-0

Fumbles-lost 1-0 4-3

Penalties 5-32 6-45

Punts-ave. 30.6 38,6

Individual Statistics

RUSHING -- Avon Grove: McGlaughlin 3-39; Kush 9-16; Harris 20-122, TD; Monk 4-31, TD; Ayers 2-2. W.C. Henderson: Mann 19-70, 2 TDs; Hovington 5-10; Lafate 18-99; Costello 7 (-14).

PASSING - Avon Grove: Kush 1-9-0 5 yards. W.C. Henderson: Costello 5-15-0 110 yards.

RECEIVING - Avon Grove: Harris 1-(-1); Ayers 1-6. W.C. Henderson: Hovington 2-21; Heaver 2-59; Shapiro 2-36.