

# Southern Chester County Sports

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## Unionville rebounds, defeats Avon Grove

By Steve Hoffman  
Staff Writer

Momentum was a fickle friend last Saturday night, as the Unionville Indians hosted the Avon Grove Red Devils in Week Three football action.

Entering the game, it was Avon Grove with the momentum: two impressive wins over Kennett and Oxford to start the season, with only seven points allowed during those first two weeks. Unionville, meanwhile, was coming off a loss—and losing isn't something that Pat Clark's Indians do well or often.

On Saturday, Unionville grabbed the momentum first. Avon Grove fumbled away a punt early in the first quarter that gave the Indians the ball deep in Red Devil territory. Five plays later, Unionville's fine quarterback, Connor Gades, found his way into the end zone for the first score. It wouldn't be the only trip to the gridiron's Promised Land on this night for Gades. He had a game to remember.

Avon Grove's electrifying Jordan Harris seized the momentum back by taking the kickoff return right up the middle to the 43-yard line. But when Avon Grove later committed a miscue on a punt attempt, momentum swung Unionville's way: they capitalized when Gades scored another touchdown, this time from nine yards out. The two-point conversion failed so the Indians held a 12-0 lead.

Avon Grove returner Zach Johnson gave the Red Devils hope with a nice run up the right sideline to the 48. Putting together a drive against Unionville is no easy task, though: The Indians' strong defense had been controlling Avon Grove's formidable running attack. The Red Devils soon had to punt away the ball, pinning the Indians deep in their own territory.

Then, unexpectedly, momentum swung to Avon Grove. Tenacious defensive back Brendan McLaughlin scooped up a fumble and ran it into the end zone for a score. The point-after made it 12-7.

Now, armed with the momentum, Avon Grove's defense turned in some stellar work and forced Unionville to punt. The Red Devils took over at the 23.

The Red Devils opted to pass

on first down. Avon Grove's Kyle Kush put just enough air under his pass for Harris to grab it and race 77 yards for a beautiful score. The PAT bounced off the upright, so Avon Grove's lead remained 13-12.

The turnaround was stunning. Unionville had been controlling the game, but two big plays put the Red Devils out in front.

A less experienced team might have panicked. The Indians remained composed and answered back.

Unionville's Greg Carroll relied on good blocking up front and then bolted down the sideline, traveling 71 yards to reach the end zone. The extra point made it 19-13.

The Red Devils needed a prolonged drive to quell Unionville's quick-strike offense and started putting one together. On first down, Kush and Harris combined again, moving the chains. Ryan Ayers found some running room and knifed his way through the forceful Unionville defense for a first down. The Red Devils soon had to punt, but managed to pin the Indians deep in their own territory.

Unionville went nowhere fast. No gain on first down and a penalty on second down moved the ball back to the four-yard line. On the next play, Gades kept the ball, swept left as blocking developed in front of him, and found nothing but open field along the left sideline. Avon Grove defenders furiously chased the quick Unionville QB.

It was Jordan Harris, already suffering from a leg injury, who finally caught and dragged Gades down just short of the goal line. The play went 93 yards. The Indians were poised to strike again.

But Avon Grove is a dogged, determined team. A running play on first down lost yardage for Unionville. Kush knocked down the pass on second down. After two more incompletions, Avon Grove had the ball—and momentum—back in their hands.

At the time, it seemed as if the play by Harris might have saved the day for the Red Devils.

When the teams entered the locker rooms at halftime with the score still 19-13 in favor of the Indians, both squads had something to be proud of. The home team had to be happy that they were able to run the ball effec-



Brendan McLaughlin, pictured here, scooped up a fumble and ran it in for a score. That boosted Avon Grove's confidence and eventually the Red Devils took the lead.



Photos (10) by Steve Hoffman

This interception by Ronnie Brittingham set up a third quarter score that finally gave Unionville some breathing room.



The Unionville High School Marching Band put on quite a show for the crowd before the game got underway.



A few big plays changed the course of the game, but for the most part the two teams matched up well.

tively and that they had the lead. The visiting Red Devils had to be happy that they had overcome a few costly early mistakes and had battled back.

Avon Grove got the ball first in the second half. But Unionville's ability to run the ball on offense and stop the run on defense soon starting paying big dividends.

Avon Grove was forced to punt while the Indians scored on a 42-yard run by Gades. The extra point made it 25-13.

An interception by Ronnie Brittingham set up another score

for the Indians. The momentum shifting was over, too: Unionville finished off the 39-13 victory.

Avon Grove proved its mettle in the first half and will look to get back on the right track against

Bishop Shanahan on Saturday. Unionville, meanwhile, hosts Stroudsburg North at 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 20. Oxford, Bayard Rustin in another contest of 2-1 teams. Kennett's football squad, coming off a 39-9 loss to Twin Valley, will host East Saturday night clash.



Avon Grove Head Coach Marvin Dooley encourages the team to keep battling during the second quarter.



The Indians entered the game looking to get back on the winning track.



The Indian faithful have grown accustomed to seeing strong performances by the football team. They weren't disappointed on Saturday.



The Red Devils entered the game with confidence, knowing that they had already posted two impressive wins.



Avon Grove's Ren Hoilman looks for running room. The Indians didn't allow much to be found.



The Indians celebrate an early score before the Red Devils started mounting a comeback.