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Irrepressible rushing attack, hard-nosed defense keep Rockets football team on march in CLC opener

If somebody is going to beat the Cedar Grove-Belgium football team this season, they’re going to have to put the clamps on the Rockets’ running game.

Good luck.

Although Cedar Grove-Belgium turned the ball over four times in last Friday’s Central Lakeshore Conference opener at Random Lake, the miscues had minimal impact on the outcome.

Piling up 364 yards on the ground, the Rockets pounded out a 21-6 win that underscored their commitment to a take-no-prisoners approach.

“We knew this would be a tough game, and we made it more difficult on ourselves by turning the ball over like we did,” said Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Chris Zablocki, whose team improved to 3-0 overall.

“The game got a little sloppy. Maybe it was early season jitters, but we made too many mistakes.”

In the end, though, the Rockets’ errors were overshadowed by a hard-nosed offensive approach and the footwork of tailback Nic Vrubley.

The 6-foot, 188-pound senior played the workhorse role to perfection, rushing for two touchdowns and a career-high 251 yards on 36 carries. He also kicked three extra points.

After the Rockets grabbed a 7-0 lead on a 2-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Kyle Bruggink to tight end Chris Peszko in the first quarter, Vrubley doubled their advantage by scoring on a 6-yard run in the second period.

The Rams answered with a 2-yard touchdown burst by quarterback Mason Anklam to pull within 14-6 by halftime.

But that was it for Random Lake’s offensive highlights. The Rams finished the night with just 147 yards in total offense, including 21 yards rushing on 29 carries, against Cedar Grove-Belgium stingy defense.

The Rockets’ ball-control approach allowed them to chew up territory and time throughout the second half. When Vrubley tacked on a 1-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter, they were assured of a solid start in their conference title defense.

When Vrubley wasn’t getting the ball, Cedar Grove-Belgium often turned to fullback Spencer Jacque. The senior, who also helps spearhead the Rockets’ defense as a linebacker, rushed 12

times for 117 yards.

The power game allowed Cedar Grove-Belgium to overcome three lost fumbles and an interception. Bruggink’s touchdown pitch was his only completion in eight passes, but he had several balls dropped by receivers, including a pair of potential touchdowns.

“There were four or five dropped passes, so you can’t blame him for those,” Zablocki said. “Random Lake also had some pressure on him.”

Offensive highlights aside, Zablocki praised the defensive play of his team, which has outscored opponents, 72-18, so far this season. He singled out Jacque, Ian Evans, Wayne Paulus and Jake Weyker for leading the charge against the Rams.

“These first three weeks have been a good test for us,” Zablocki said. “We’ve played three really good teams, and we’ve learned a lot about what we have to work on.

“We’ve had to overcome some adversity each time.”

This Friday, the Rockets will try to stay on a roll when they host Sheboygan Lutheran in a Parents Night game at 7 p.m.