Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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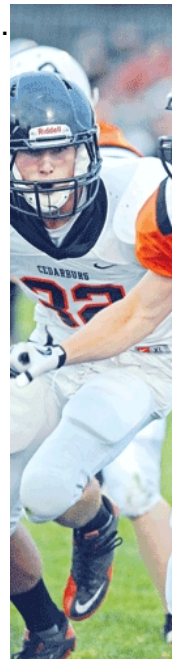
Grafton gives favored Bulldogs a fight but falls victim to big plays in loss

Mistakes in the form of penalties and turnovers didn't hurt the Grafton Black Hawks on the football field last Friday.

Defensive miscues, including subpar tackling and missed assignments, were another matter.



Despite showing offensive spark and staying in contention most of the night, the host Hawks eventually fell to Cedarburg, 34-14, in a North Shore Conference game.

"We gave up some big plays that cost us," said Grafton coach Ben Chossek, whose team trailed by only 21-7 at halftime before the Bulldogs slowly took charge.

"We got a touchdown late in the first half, and we were hoping to come out in the third quarter, score and get right back in the game. But Cedarburg has a strong football team. They came up with the plays when they needed to."

The Hawks showed they are a much-improved team by hanging close to a foe that had beaten them badly the last three years — 56-0 in 2011, 49-6 in 2010 and 56-0 in 2009. However, Cedarburg again maintained the upper hand with a quick-strike scoring attack that produced four touchdown plays of 25 or more yards.

Tailback Hudson Walton did much of the damage by rushing for a game-high 223 yards and three touchdowns on 26 carries. He provided both of the Bulldogs' second-half touchdowns on runs of 25 and three yards, with the latter capping the scoring in the final two minutes.

Quarterback Mike Mojica threw two first-half touchdown passes for Cedarburg, including a 49-yard strike to Walton that gave their team a 21-0 lead with 3:27 left before intermission.

“We did a pretty good job on a large number of plays, but we had some breakdowns. We should have tackled better,” Chossek said.

“Walton is a tremendous back, and he made us miss sometimes, but we didn’t wrap up enough. There were two pass plays that we also didn’t defend very well.”

The Hawks gave themselves a fighting chance with a rally in the final minute of the first half.

Quarterback Matt Weisflog, who kept several drives alive with his running and passing, capped a three-play, 30-yard drive with a 20-yard touchdown scramble with 26 seconds to play. Tim Grams’ extra point pulled the Hawks within two scores.

Directing Grafton’s triple-threat option offense, Weisflog rushed for 82 yards on 23 yards, including a game-best 67-yard run. He was 5-for-15 passing for 82 yards, including completions of 27 yards to tight end Beau Benzschawel and 23 yards to wide receiver Alex Gall.

“He’s been a tremendous leader for us,” Chossek said of Weisflog, a junior whose athleticism provides the motor in the Hawks’ offense.

“He has a lot of stress on his shoulders running the offense, but he’s handling it very well.”

Sophomore Matt Pfannerstill also bolstered the Grafton rushing attack by contributing 62 yards on 16 carries.

Cedarburg, which shared the conference title last year with Homestead, began to dash the Hawks’ upset hopes by taking control in the third quarter. Midway through the period, the Bulldogs went on an eight-play, 66-yard march culminating in a 25-yard touchdown run by Walton with 1:22 to play.

Trailing, 27-7, Grafton bounced back with a Weisflog-led scoring effort of its own. The 10-play, 59-yard drive was capped by his touchdown pass to Gall with 9:24 left in the game.

Chossek was pleased with his team’s resilience, noting that “we’re a much more physical team this year, and we have more experience.”

However, he noted that simply playing opponents tough is small consolation.

“We definitely want to put ourselves in position to win games, and then win them,” Chossek said.

“We just have to get better every day, give ourselves a chance to compete, and make it happen.”

Grafton will take another shot at a breakthrough finish this Friday when it travels to Germantown for a 7 p.m. conference game.

Image Information: GRAFTON RUNNING BACK Alex Teich was determined to find an opening in the line during a carry against Cedarburg in a North Shore Conference game last Friday. Grafton gave the Bulldogs a battle before losing, 34-14. Photo by Sam Arendt