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Nonconference foe, wind no problem for CG-Belgium in easy homecoming victory

Blustery wind blew away most of the Cedar Grove-Belgium football team's passing plans last Friday night.

But with the success the host Rockets had running the ball, few people probably noticed.

Piling up 343 rushing yards, Cedar Grove-Belgium pounded its way past Gibraltar for a 33-0 homecoming victory.

In addition to assuring the Rockets of a winning season, the outcome kept them on a major roll heading toward the WIAA playoffs.

"It was a great game for us," said Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Chris Zablocki, whose team notched its fifth straight win after opening the season with two nonconference losses.

"We made some mistakes, but our offense knew what it needed to do and got the job done. Our defense also played a solid game, too."

By dominating the line of scrimmage, the Rockets steadily turned the nonconference game into a mismatch.

Gibraltar (1-6) was limited to 71 yards in total offense, including just 31 yards on the ground.

Cedar Grove-Belgium got all the scoring it needed in the first quarter.

Senior back Alex Giles, who rushed for 244 yards and two touchdowns on 24 carries, put the Rockets up for good with a 5-yard scoring run.

Although Cedar Grove-Belgium quarterback Drew Emperley was only 1-for-5 passing, his lone completion resulted in a 26-yard touchdown play. Wide receiver Logan Peterson did the scoring honors, as the Rockets took a 14-0 lead.

Peterson made sure his team's defense also lit up the scoreboard. In the second quarter, he intercepted a pass by quarterback Austin Kissel and raced 30 yards for a touchdown.

After Emperley scored on a 1-yard keeper, the Rockets took a 26-0 lead into halftime.

Cedar Grove-Belgium chewed up much of the clock in the second half with its ball-control offense. The only scoring came on a 64-yard touchdown burst by Giles in the third quarter.

"It was good to see our defense step up," Zablocki said. "They're improving every week, and our tackling is getting better."

When Giles wasn't gashing the Gibraltar defense, the Rockets got contributions from six other ball carriers.

Aaron Chier rushed for 58 yards on nine attempts, and Josh Winkleff added 19 yards on four carries.

The win evened the Rockets' nonconference record at 2-2. More importantly, it helped strengthen their position heading into playoff seeding.

Cedar Grove-Belgium has already clinched a share of the Central Lakeshore Conference title with a 3-0 record. The Rockets can wrap up their second straight outright league crown with a win this Friday, when they travel to Oostburg for a 7 p.m. regular-season finale.

Oostburg (0-3) has struggled this year, but Zablocki is taking nothing for granted.

"Oostburg has always been a great rival. You can throw the records out the window when we play each other," he said.

"We expect a tough game, and we will have to be ready. I'm sure our kids know what's at stake."

Image Information: CEDAR GROVE-BELGIUM QUARTERBACK Drew Emperley reached out to grab an errant snap during his team's nonconference game against Gibraltar last Friday. The Rockets maintained possession on the play and cruised to a 33-0 homecoming win.
Photo by Sam Arendt