

Rockets wear the crown against King

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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CG-Belgium football team more than equal to task in opener against Milwaukee foe

The Cedar Grove-Belgium football team hasn't had a chance to knock heads with Division 1 foes very often.

In last Friday's season opener against Milwaukee King, the Rockets made the most of the opportunity.



Combining aggressive defense with efficient offense, coach Chris Zablocki's squad muscled its way to a 35-2, nonconference win at home.

"We only have 300 kids and going up against a school of 1,500 is a real challenge," Zablocki said.

"It's not easy finding nonconference games, and this is the way it worked out for us. We looked at it as a great opportunity."

Except for a missed blocking assignment that led to a botched punt and gave King a first-quarter safety, the Rockets had little trouble taking charge.

Offensively, they piled up 402 total yards, including 325 on the ground, and scored five touchdowns.

Running back Aaron Chier led the charge with 166 rushing yards and three touchdowns on 18 carries.

Josh Winkleff added 68 yards on 11 rushes, including a 19-yard touchdown run that put the Rockets ahead for good in the opening period.

Several of the scores were set up by Cedar Grove-Belgium's hard-hitting defense, which forced seven turnovers.

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Linebacker Greg Wenzel and lineman Matt Krier led the Rockets with six tackles apiece.

One of King's miscues came when the Rockets squibbed the opening kickoff. When the ball was coughed up, they recovered deep in King territory, setting up a five-play scoring drive capped by Winkleff's touchdown.

"We started out fast, and that set the tone," Zablocki said. "Anytime you can force that many turnovers, you should have a great chance to win."

Chier, a junior, carried much of the offensive load for the Rockets. After his 69-yard touchdown run in the second period helped Cedar Grove-Belgium take a 14-2 lead at intermission, he added scoring bursts of eight and three yards in the second half.

Wenzel, who contributed 44 yards rushing, capped the scoring with a 4-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter.

"We had three guys carrying the ball for us with Chier, Wenzel and Winkleff. It gives us a pretty balanced attack, a nice mixture of speed and power," Zablocki said.

King, which had an 8-1 record last season but lost several standout players to graduation, collected 201 yards, including a 115-yard rushing effort by Saquan Dowery. However, the Generals were repeatedly stymied by turnovers.

Recovering fumbles for the Rockets were Wenzel, Winkleff, Chier and David Niebauer.

Intercepting passes were Drew Emperley, Niebauer and Winkleff.

"King was starting a young quarterback, and we put a lot of pressure on them," Zablocki said.

"The kids did a good job of executing our game plan."

This Friday, the Rockets will begin a rough stretch of five consecutive road games when they travel to Manitowoc Lutheran for a 7 p.m. nonconference contest.

Lutheran defeated Cedar Grove-Belgium, 20-15, last year but is coming off a season-opening loss to Ozaukee, 28-20 in overtime, last Friday.

"It going to be a challenge for us each week, and we're going to have to be ready," Zablocki said.

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Image Information: AARON CHIER rushed for a game-high 166 yards and three touchdowns in Cedar Grove-Belgium's 35-2 win over Milwaukee King. Photo by Sam Arendt