

Rockets blast past Warriors' big plays

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Hard-nosed defense, Chier-sparked offense allow CG-Belgium to overcome Ozaukee in CLC showdown

The defense seldom rests for the Cedar Grove-Belgium football team, especially when it squares off against a longtime rival.

Although the host Rockets surrendered a pair of long scoring plays, they landed more than enough counterpunches to secure a 35-14 win over Ozaukee last Friday.



The Warriors hung tough in the first half, throwing a scare into Cedar Grove-Belgium with quick-strike touchdowns that kept them within 21-14 at intermission.

Ozaukee grabbed a 7-0 lead in the first quarter on a 71-yard scoring pass from quarter Jacob Wolff to Michael Richter.

The Rockets responded with three unanswered touchdowns, including a 1-yard burst by Aaron Chier that gave them a 21-7 lead with just 22 seconds left in the half.

But on the ensuing kickoff, Collin Stageman re-energized the Warriors by fielding the ball and racing 82 yards to the end zone.

It was enough to give everyone on the Cedar Grove-Belgium side pause, including head coach Chris Zablocki.

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"Hats off to Ozaukee's special teams. They broke a big play on us that kept them right in the game," said Zablocki, whose team improved its first-place CLC record to 4-0 with the homecoming victory.

"Every time we face off with Ozaukee, we know it's going to be a great game. They have a young team but played real hard.

"We had to work for everything we got."

What Zablocki and his staff got in the second half was a dominant effort in which the Rockets controlled the line of scrimmage.

Chier helped his team reassert itself midway through the third period. After Ozaukee drove into Cedar Grove-Belgium territory before surrendering the ball on downs, the Rockets gave the ball to the junior halfback.

Chier broke free for his third touchdown of the night on a 64-yard run. The sprint not only helped him finish with 100 yards on 13 carries, it put Cedar Grove-Belgium firmly in charge.

"That was a huge play for us. We've had a lot of great running backs at Cedar Grove, but Aaron is the fastest," Zablocki said.

"He's a special young man. He has a chance to go the distance whenever he touches the ball."

On the other hand, the Warriors had trouble mustering second-half offense. They finished the game with just 136 yards of total offense, including 51 rushing on 35 attempts.

More than half of Ozaukee's total yardage came on its first-quarter touchdown.

"I'm proud of our kids. I thought they played hard," said Ozaukee coach Jim Lippe, whose team fell to 1-2 in the conference.

"We knew it would be hard to move the ball against Cedar Grove. They have a senior-laden team, and we're playing a lot of sophomores."

Stageman's kickoff return provided a wake-up call for the Rockets, according to Zablocki.

"It was a good reminder for us that it was anybody's game," he said. "But our kids stayed focused at halftime.

"It should have been 21-7, but we knew we were OK. We just had to come out and get the job done in the second half."

The Rockets' focus helped them pile up 320 yards in total offense, including 200 on the ground.

Quarterback Drew Emperley was 5-for-9 passing for 120 yards, including a 48-yard touchdown

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pitch to Logan Peterson. His lone miscue was an interception by Cole Large.

Emperley capped the scoring with a 14-yard touchdown run.

Cedar Grove-Belgium's stingy defense limited Wolff to 3-for-13 passing with three interceptions. Peterson, David Niebauer and Adam Chier had picks.

This Friday, the Rockets will take a break from CLC play when they host Hilbert at 7 p.m.

The same night, Ozaukee will host Howards Grove in a 7 p.m. conference game.

Image Information: AARON CHIER rushed for 100 yards on 13 carries and scored three touchdowns in Cedar Grove-Belgium's homecoming win over Ozaukee last Friday night.

Photo by Sam Arendt