

Cedar Valley Christian enjoys first victory

Written by Jim Ecker

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Cedar Valley Christian took a bold step four years ago when it started a high school football program from scratch with a bunch of inexperienced kids and no field.

The Huskies were determined to have a team at their small school on the southeast side of Cedar Rapids and all their hard work paid off Friday night.

Cedar Valley trimmed Harmony, 30-20, for the first victory in school history in an 8-Player game in Farmington, snapping a streak of 22 lopsided defeats.

"That's great," Coach Ed Betsworth said Saturday morning. "I'm glad it happened, finally."

The Huskies finished with an 0-4 record in 2011, went 0-9 in 2012 and 0-9 again last year. Some of those scores were pretty ugly as the Huskies learned how to play the game, but they got a nice reward Friday.

"There was a lot of celebration going on," said Betsworth. "Everybody was excited - the fans, the kids. It was a good experience for them."

"We had to work for it. Harmony did not roll over and die. We kept pushing it and got the victory."

Harmony started its own 8-Player team this season after having a shared program with Central Lee in recent years. The Rockets had 16 players in uniform Friday and Cedar Valley Christian had 20, giving the Huskies a rare manpower advantage.

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Harmony led, 8-6, at halftime, but Collin Heeren returned the second-half kickoff for a touchdown to give the Huskies a 12-8 advantage.

Cedar Valley quarterback Kenan Ulmer ran for two touchdowns and Apollo Betsworth, the coach's son, also ran for a touchdown. The Huskies collected a safety and a pair of two-conversions for their 30 points.

The Huskies enjoyed their two-hour ride home from Farmington after the game.

"There was a lot of celebrating," Betsworth reported. "They had music on. They were singing along, pretty much off-key. They had a good time coming home."

Betsworth was primarily responsible for starting the football program at Cedar Valley and has been the head coach since the beginning. He said he's thoroughly enjoyed the ride, despite the lumps along the way.

"It speaks volumes for the kids, for the support I get from the administration," said Betsworth. "They've all been patient. They all realized it was going to be a journey."

"It's a great experience," he said. "I'm a very lucky man. My assistant coaches are very lucky guys. We're in a great environment."

"These kids are family. They hang around each other, they love each other. You couldn't ask for a better group of kids."

Betsworth liked what he saw from his team in a 7-on-7 passing league this summer against much bigger schools and was confident the Huskies would be competitive in games this year and have a chance to be victorious.

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They don't want to stop with just one victory.

"We have a goal this year," he said. "About five wins is what we're looking for. Who knows? Maybe more.

"They're not going to quit," said Betsworth. "They're excited and they're going to get ready for Clarksville now."

Their hard work is paying off.

"It's what we talked to them about in the beginning," said Betsworth. "You're going to have to work harder than everybody else out there.

"You're going to have to push yourselves, because we're not a big team. We don't have a lot of depth.

"We told them you have to push yourselves if you want to win, and they did that. They made that commitment and they went out and did it."

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