

Huskies show spirit in defeat

Written by Mike Koolbeck

Friday, 19 August 2011 23:43 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 August 2011 19:15

MAYNARD -- The outcome was as expected.

The moment was better than anticipated.

Junior Nick Henderson scored Cedar Valley Christian's first touchdown in school history on a 43-yard pass play midway through the fourth quarter Friday night at West Central High School. It was the highlight of the Huskies' first football game, a 62-8 rout at the hands of highly-regarded West Central.

"That's a morale booster all the way around," Cedar Valley Christian Coach Ed Betsworth said of the scoring play. "It shows that if we don't quit -- and that's what I emphasized on the bus on the way up -- that good things will happen. I think we're going to take to heart that we scored against a good team. It's going to make us feel that we can compete."

Henderson hauled in the pass from junior Arturo Melendez at the West Central 30. A Blue Devils defensive back wrapped up on his right leg, but he kept moving forward, shucked the tackler and sprinted to paydirt.

"I just caught it and kept on pumping my legs," said Henderson, playing his first game of organized football.

Cedar Valley Christian had a crowd of more than 100 fans along that went wild after the touchdown. The West Central fans also cheered the Huskies.

Betsworth heaped praise upon his team in the post-game huddle, praising them for their effort and never-say-die attitude. He also beckoned the Cedar Valley Christian cheering section onto the field to join his players in a mass group huddle after his initial words to his team to share his thoughts about the game and to ask for the players and the fans to offer their input. It was all positive, even if the word "creamed" did get tossed in a couple of times.

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"I'll tell you what I'm proud of," Principal Jeff Pospisil told the throng, "even when we were getting creamed, we never gave up."

Cedar Valley had 13 players in uniform and 12 were playing their first game of organized football. West Central, a traditional Eastern Iowa football power that qualified for the 8-man playoffs last season when it was 7-3, had 28 players in uniform and all had prior football experience.

Small wonder then that the Blue Devils scored on eight of 10 first-half possessions. West Central led 34-0 at the end of the first quarter, thanks to four touchdown runs by junior Michael Lincoln, and 56-0 at halftime. Lincoln carried the ball five times for 87 yards, including touchdown runs of 22, 37, 10 and 15 yards. He only played the first quarter.

"The stats you get in a game like this are not the stats that set records," said West Central Coach Steve Milder, who substituted liberally after the first quarter. The Blue Devils used three quarterbacks in the first half and five throughout the game. They also had 12 different players carry the ball. "My I-back (Lincoln) had 80-some yards at best and four touchdowns. The whole thing is, he doesn't want to get stats in this game, either. You want to get them in the games that count, and they know that about me. They know that they're not going to be left in just to get yardage.

"We're here to get our program better," Milder said. "Our freshmen and sophomore players probably played more than our varsity tonight. But, that's fine because that's what they (Cedar Valley) need. They didn't need us to come out and see how many points we could score."

With the score 56-0 at halftime, there was a running clock in the second half, which zipped by. West Central scored with 10:16 left in the game to make it 62-0 before Cedar Valley Christian scored its touchdown.

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"What can I say," Betsworth said. "It shows that we're a new team, that we're inexperienced. It also shows us the heart and character of these kids."

It also shows how far the team has come in a three-week span. Huskies assistant coach Randy Gustafson said when practices first started, the coaches discovered just how much they had to teach.

"We told them to get up on the line of scrimmage and they wanted to know what that was," Gustafson said. "I told a player to get in at tight end and he asked me what a tight end was. That's where we started and that's how far we've come so far."

One of the biggest concerns was injuries. With 13 men available, the margin for losing a player was practically nil. Junior Spencer Zielke did suffer a possible concussion and starting quarterback Jeremy Strutz incurred a stinger that put him on the sidelines. The latter gave Melendez, who missed a week of practice because of a family vacation, an opportunity and he completed 3 of 8 passes for 75 yards.

Betsworth said he was encouraged by the showing and hoped his team was back to full strength by the time it plays at Dunkerton on Sept. 2. The Huskies are playing only a four-game schedule that also includes Midland and Central City.

"By the time we're playing Central City on Sept. 23, we're going to be a lot better team than we showed tonight," Betsworth said. "Dunkerton, Midland and Central City are in the same boat as us. They're young, they're inexperienced and I think those are going to be good match-ups for us. I think we're going to have a little bit better time of competing with those kind of teams."

WEST CENTRAL 62, CEDAR VALLEY CHRISTIAN 8

Cedar Valley	0	0	0	8	--	8
West Central	34	22	0	6	--	62

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WC -- Michael Lincoln 22 run (Amos Miller kick)
WC -- Devin Decker 22 pass from Bryan Byerly (Miller kick)
WC -- Lincoln 37 run (Miller kick)
WC -- Lincoln 10 run (Miller kick)
WC -- Lincoln 15 run (kick failed)
WC -- Lucas Cavanaugh 5 run (Miller kick)
WC -- Miller 10 run (Miller kick)
WC -- Miller 23 pass from Colton Ingels (Spencer Grimm run)
WC -- Kaleb Kline 17 run (run failed)
CV -- Nick Henderson 43 pass from Arturo Melendez (Melendez run)

Team Stats

First downs -- CVC 6, WC 15

Rushes yards -- CVC 31-(-40), WC 38-320

Receiving yards -- CVC 99, WC 45

Comp-Att-Int -- CVC 6-17-3, WC 2-3-0

Punts-avg. -- CVC 4-25.0, WC 0

Fumbles-lost -- CVC 7-1, WC 5-3

Penalties-yards -- CVC 5-35, WC 3-30

Individual Stats

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Rushing -- CVC: Nick Henderson 9-5, Arturo Melendez 7-2, Eric Gustafson 1-(minus-1), David Sperling 3-(minus-11), Jeremy Strutz 11-(minus 35); WC: Michael Lincoln 5-87, Lucas Cavanaugh 8-54, Spencer Grimm 6-52, Kaleb Kime 5-38, Amos Miller 3-31, Joey Wolfe 3-18, James Niermann 2-18, Bryan Byerly 2-15, Jake Doty 1-7, Derek Woods 1-6, Mason Bantz 1-0, Colton Ingels 1-(minus 6).

Passing -- CVC: Melendez 3-8-1-75, Strutz 3-9-2-24; WC: Byerly 1-2-0-22, Ingles 1-1-0-23.

Receiving -- CVC: Sperling 3-33, Henderson 2-51, Luke Long 1-15; WC: Miller 1-23, Devin Decker 1-22.