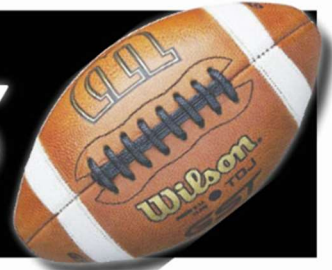


The Blitz Week 5

THE BEST OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



**HIGHLAND 49,
TALLMADGE 0**



**CLOVERLEAF 28,
COVENTRY 6**

Just keep winning

'D' carries load; Colts now 4-1

Albert Grindle
The Gazette

WESTFIELD TWP. — While everything hasn't been all rainbows and unicorns, a lot of high school football teams would love to trade places with Cloverleaf right now.

The Colts ran their winning streak to four, pulling away from winless Coventry 28-6 for a Metro Athletic Conference win on a Friday night that was a flowless mess at times with 16 penalties, double-digit injury timeouts, three chain-gang measurements — a rarity with so many turf fields these days — and a wildly inconsistent Cloverleaf offense.

On the bright side, the Colts (4-1, 2-0) are now a near-lock to qualify for the Division IV, Region 14 playoffs heading into next week against Ravenna (1-4, 0-2). They also forced three more turnovers to extend their Medina County lead to 14 and surpassed 350 yards total offense in sophomore Isaac Smith's first lifetime start at quarterback.

Sometimes it is easy to forget this team can have five sophomores and a freshman on the field any time, so the big picture is what's important.

"It feels great, but we're definitely not where we want to be," senior two-way tackle Royce Zirkle said. "I'm happy, but definitely not satisfied, though. I have bigger plans for us — hopefully a conference championship — in the future. Our biggest goal is to get better every week."

The defense was the savior, as the offense couldn't get out of its own way after roaring to a 21-0 lead late in the first half. Coventry (0-5, 0-2), which has lost 18 of its last 19 and showed no sense of urgency even when it had a chance to come back, finished with 129 yards total offense that included completing only 3-of-14 passes despite the Colts losing county leading tackler Clay Combs to a left ankle injury in the first half.

Cloverleaf's Ashton Gray, Kellen Price and Gage Groetz — all sophomores — had interceptions, while Dylan Wittman, Adam Gray, Cameron Newman and Ethan Martin factored in tackles for loss. The biggest play, however, came from the biggest Colt, the 6-foot-3, 295-pound Zirkle.

See COLTS, E3



AARON JOSEFCZYK / GAZETTE

Highland's Matthew Dean sacks Tallmadge's Ryan Loveless.

Lock the gates

Hornets bully Blue Devils in stunning blowout

Chad Grant
The Gazette

TALLMADGE — The Highland football team gave a 50% discount on the "L" it hung on Tallmadge.

With all the starters spectating in the second half Friday night, the Hornets walloped Tallmadge 49-0 in a Suburban League American Conference win.

Highland (5-0, 2-0) did all its



Borla



Myser

work in the first half going a perfect 7-for-7 on possessions to build

a 49-0 lead.

Quarterback Dylan Borla kept up his spectacular play behind center and continues to let teams know that if they gear up to stop Casey Myser and the Highland run game, the Hornets will make them pay.

The senior quarterback finished his two quarters with a career-high 282 yards passing, connecting on

10-of-14 attempts. Four went for more than 50 yards, including three touchdowns.

"With our run game and the danger it provides with play-action, we know we can just pass when we want," Borla said. "We just give a hard play fake and I see safeties staring at me. I know I can pass the ball on them."

See HORNETS, E2

See COLTS, E3

Highland 49, Tallmadge 0

HIGHLAND 21 28 0 0 - 49
TALLMADGE 0 0 0 0 - 0

First
H — Casey Myser 6 run (Jonah Kowza kick), 8:40.
H — Dylan Borla 1 run (Kowza kick), 5:11.
H — Myser 7 run (Kowza kick), 2:33.

Second
H — Myser 54 pass from Borla (Kowza kick), 11:05.
H — Myser 51 pass from Borla (Kowza kick), 8:46.
H — Luke Berkmeier 65 pass from Borla (Kowza kick), 5:50.
H — Evan Foust 3 run (Kowza kick), 0:24.

	H	T
First downs	16	9
Rushing	27/150	25/48
Rushing average	5.6	1.9
Passing	10/14	10/18
Passing yards	282	108
Total offense	41/432	43/156
Punting	1/54.0	4/37.8
Penalties	3/35	3/25
Fumbles	0/0	1/1

RUSHING: Highland — Noah Wolny 3-40, Myser 7-36, Foust 6-32, Lucas Gerding 2-18, Borla 3-14, Dylan Lazar 2-5, Anthony DePompal 1-5, Franke (innings) 1-2, Team 2-(-2), Tallmadge — Daron Cask 3-20, Joseph Kanatzer 4-15, Ricky Maclean 4-11, Lucas Sterra 1-9, Trey Kerston 3-7, Santino Cuva 3-5, Gino Lagani 1-3, Ryan Loveless 6-(-22).

PASSING: Highland — Borla 10-14-282-0, Tallmadge — Loveless 10-18-108-1.

RECEIVING: Highland — Myser 2-105, Gerding 4-86, Berkmeier 1-65, Nick Dobkowski 2-19, Kyle Williams 1-7, Tallmadge — Quenton Johns 1-39, Robbie Reid 3-32, Caleb Kendrick 2-30, Tracey Franklin 3-8, Caleb Reitsnyder 1-(-1).

HORNETS

From E1

Highland started the game flexing with the running game, driving 65 yards in eight plays, with Myser (7 carries, 36 yards; 2 catches, 105 yards, 4 TDs) capping the effort with a 6-yard scoring run.

The defense gave the offense a short field for the next score when Evan Foust chased down Tallmadge (3-2, 1-1) quarterback Ryan Loveless and forced a fumble that was recovered by Kallen Whiting at the Blue Devils 5-yard line.

Borla scored on a 1-yard sneak on fourth down to put the Hornets in front 14-0 with 5:11 left in the first quarter.

The airshow took over for Highland for the remainder of the first half.

Borla hit Lucas Gerding (4 catches, 86 yards) for a 59-yard catch-and-run to set up Myser's second rushing touchdown, a 7-yard walk-in up the middle one play later.

"We have everything we need to go far," Borla said. "We are clicking. We are still not at our peak performance yet, but we are getting up there."

Borla then found Myser on a wheel route for a 54-yard touchdown and hit the same route to the running back on Highland's next possession for a 51-yard score.

"It's something we have worked on all off-season," Myser said. "Teams start loading up in the box, so get me out in the flat. (Borla) is a great



AARON JOSEFCZYK / GAZETTE

Highland's Lucas Gerding runs out of a tackle from Tallmadge's Caleb Kendrick after making a reception.

quarterback, and I know he is going to find me out there. He found me on those two today."

The 6-foot, 185-pound Borla had one more big play left on Highland's next drive, hitting Luke Berkmeier for a 65-yard score on the Hornets' first play after forcing a Tallmadge punt.

With just under 1½ quarters in the books, Highland led 42-0.

"We've got great wide receivers and a great quarterback," Myser said. "(The passing game) makes us a lot more dangerous. (Borla) has always

been able to throw — he had two tough knee injuries — but he's been a great quarterback all the way coming up."

The Hornets added one more score before the half, as Evan Foust (6 carries, 32 yards) replaced Myser in the backfield and toted the ball five times on an 11-play, 54-yard drive and capped it with a 3-yard touchdown.

At the half, the numbers in the stat book were just as lopsided as the ones on the scoreboard. Highland had 382 yards of offense to just 47 for Tallmadge, with 39 coming on a

completion from Loveless to Quenton Johns.

"We studied them so hard," two-way lineman Carson Noonan said. "That is what we are going to do every single week. That's how we prepare."

The Hornets defense also continued to impress, sacking Loveless (10-of-18 passing, 108 yards, INT) five times, forcing three turnovers and allowing just 156 yards.

"We knew that they were going to try and throw the ball quick," said fellow two-way lineman Ryan Zywiec, one of five Hornets with a sack. "He

couldn't be in the pocket for long because we were going to pressure him."

Noah Wolny ended up leading the Hornets in rushing with 40 yards on just three carries, pacing his team's 150-yard performance on the ground.

About the only thing that didn't go right for the Hornets was having a spectacular 93-yard interception return for a score by Cooper Zielinski wiped out by a flag late in the third quarter.

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