

## High school football: Highland rolls over Copley



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COPLEY TWP. — Anyone questioning the Highland football team's sportsmanship during an 88-14 Suburban League American Conference victory over Copley on Friday needs to take the final touchdown into account.

Hornets freshman Evan Foust had just scored from 58 yards on the first play of the fourth quarter. The Indians then air-mailed a punt snap that was recovered on the 1-yard line with 7 minutes left, and Highland took four consecutive quarterback kneels to give the ball back.

Copley decided to go for it on fourth down from its 5 on the ensuing possession, but a bad snap trickled into the end zone and sophomore defensive end Brock Leatherman fell on the ball for the final TD. The Hornets took another knee on the conversion — their sixth kneel of the game — and the teams were halfway through the handshake line when the running clock officially reached zero.

The defending conference champion Hornets (3-1, 1-0) began substituting late in the first quarter, benched most of the starters midway through the second and used their third- and fourth-string quarterbacks. The fact they scored the fourth-most points in Medina County history after leading 42-0 in the first quarter was almost an accident.

"We came in here and did what we know how to do," veteran left guard Ben Fearn said. "The scoreboard shows what it was."

Despite losing 7 yards on five QB kneels, Highland had 37 rushing attempts for 505 yards and nine touchdowns while completing 3-of-3 passing attempts for 57 yards and two more TDs. The other scores were Leatherman's fumble recovery and a 54-yard punt return by All-Ohioan Matt Ciryak, the fifth punt return TD of his career.

Casey Myser rushed three times for 100 yards and scores of 28 and 29 yards. Evan Grant (4 carries, 66 yards, 2 TDs) and Ciryak (1, 56, 1) also scored on the ground during the first quarter, Tommy Turk caught a 33-yard dime from a rolling Peyton Janickas (3 carries, 58 yards; 3-for-3, 57 yards, 2 TDs) and Ciryak was wide open on a 10-yard TD catch.

When Janickas took the final play of the first quarter 30 yards on an option keeper, the Hornets had run 10 plays for a remarkable 284 yards.

"I didn't expect it would be that many (yards), but I knew we were driving down the field like there was no other," Fearn said.

Copley's only points against the first string came when St. Vincent-St. Mary transfer Gabe Mansel scored on a 9-yard keeper with 7 seconds left in the first quarter. The Indians added a 58-yard Julian Bearshak TD run against the junior varsity that cut the score to 63-14 with 8 seconds to go before halftime.

Subtract the Bearshak score and Copley finished with 138 yards on 59 plays. The Indians were 0-for-3 on fourth down, intercepted by Chase Crutchley and Jason Sambor and consistently forced to fall on Highland squib kicks that led to an average starting field position of the 26-yard line.

Mansel was the top threat, rushing 16 times for 38 yards and completing 9-of-20 passes for 96 yards.

"A lot of practice this week," Sambor said. "We made some checks to the formations that they were going to come out it, and we played it."

Highland's other scores were a 13-yard Lucas Gerding run, a 36-yard Luke Berkmeier jet sweep and a 3-yard rush by 5-foot-4 sophomore Dylan Lazar. Foust did not receive credit for his 58-yard TD from the public address announcer because his No. 33 jersey was not listed on the roster.

Regardless of how the points transpired, the total is the most by a Medina County team since Coventry refused to punt and Wadsworth posted a 90-14 victory on Sept. 13, 1968. The only higher totals were Wadsworth's 92-0 win over Grafton in 1922 and Medina's infamous 159-6 beating of Spencer on Oct. 5, 1923.

"Everybody played hard. I know the JV players did," Sambor said. "They got their chance to get a little experience under the lights, which was nice. It's always good to get them some experience. They're going to do great."

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Highland 88, Copley 14

HIGHLAND 42 21 13 12 — 88

COPLEY 7 7 0 0 — 14

First

H — Casey Myser 58 yards (Carson Kwiatkowski kick), 10:19.

H — Evan Grant 8 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 8:47.

H — Tommy Turk 33 pass from Peyton Janickas (Kwiatkowski kick), 7:52.

H — Myser 29 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 5:54.

H — Matt Ciryak 56 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 3:09.

H — Ciryak 54 punt return (Kwiatkowski kick), 1:38.

C — Gabe Mansel 9 run (Michael Luecke kick), 0:07.

Second

H — Ciryak 10 pass from Janickas (Kwiatkowski kick), 11:21.

H — Grant 1 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 7:01.

H — Lucas Gerding 13 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 0:37.

C — Julian Bearshak 58 run (Luecke kick), 0:08.

Third

H — Luke Berkmeier 36 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 8:14.

H — Dylan Lazar 3 run (kick failed), 3:48.

Fourth

H — Evan Foust 58 run (kick failed), 11:34.

H — Brock Leatherman fumble recovery in end zone (run failed), 1:40.

H      C

First downs      20      9

Rushing      37/505 38/100

Rushing average      13.6      2.6

Passing      3/3      9/22

Passing yards      57      96

Total offense      40/562 60/196

Punting      0/0.0 7/25.9

Penalties      3/25      3/25

Fumbles      1/0      4/1

RUSHING: Highland — Myser 3-100, Grant 4-66, Janickas 3-58, Foust 1-58, Ciryak 1-56, Johnny Siliko 2-48, Lazar 3-45, Gerding 6-36, Berkmeier 3-35, Grady Gibb 3-5, Turk 1-3, Kyle Williams 1-1, Elijah Howard 1-1, Team 5-(-7). Copley — Bearshak 4-69, Mansel 16-38, R'Monee Brown 1-12, Ricardo Childs 7-9, Tony Cox 5-3, Rhalachi Childs 1-2, Anderson Madden 1-(-3), Team 3-(-30).

PASSING: Highland — Janickas 3-3-57-0. Copley — Mansel 9-20-96-1, Madden 0-1-0-0, Bearshak 0-1-0-1.

RECEIVING: Highland — Turk 1-33, Ciryak 2-24. Copley — Andrew McKnight 3-46, Jacob Kuczkowski 2-33, Brown 2-15, Bearshak 1-3, Cox 1-(-1).

