

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



HIGHLAND 42,
COPLEY 9



Defense sets tone as Hornets move to 5-0

John Urchek
The Gazette

COPLEY TWP. — The Highland football team's defense made a very clear statement and running back Casey Myser joined an elite club Friday night.

The combination led to a dominant first half and a 42-9 Suburban League American Conference victory over neighboring rival Copley in a game that never felt as close as the final score.

Highland (5-0, 2-0) held its fifth straight opponent to 10 points or fewer despite the Indians (3-2, 1-1) entering play averaging 39.8 points. With the starting defense playing only the first half before starting to give way to the backups, the numbers were even more impressive. Copley did not score in the first half and only had 31 of its 105 rushing yards and 41 of its 84 passing yards before halftime.

"We came in here knowing they had a solid offense," linebacker Kallen Whitling said. "We game-planned all week for them. They threw some crazy stuff at us, but we came out, executed and put them in the dirt."

Whitling intercepted Indians quar-



Whitling



Myser

terback Dane Winger on third down on the second drive for the defense.

"We've seen that play hundreds of times on film this week," he said. "We knew it was coming, were in the right coverage and the quarterback didn't make a great throw. He threw it right to me."

That stop set up the first of three touchdowns by Myser, a 6-yard score that made him the fifth player in Medina County history to reach 4,000 yards and the first Homet.

"Honestly, I didn't know I was that close, but that's really awesome," he said of the mark. "All this hard work I've been doing is really paying off."

Myser finished with 117 yards on just eight carries, all in the first half.

Despite the lopsided nature of the win, Myser kept the victory in perspec-

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HIGHLAND	28	14	0	0	—	42
COPLEY	0	0	9	0	—	9
First						
H —	Jake Weber	39	pass from Grady Gibb	(Jonah Kowza kick), 10:58.		
H —	Casey Myser	6	run (Kowza kick), 8:51.			
H —	Myser	63	run (Kowza kick), 3:09.			
H —	Dylan Lazar	3	run (Kowza kick), 1:07.			
Second						
H —	Myser	6	run (Landon Kuzma kick), 7:48.			
H —	Weber	13	pass from Gibb (Kuzma kick), 4:39.			
Third						
C —	Safety	(ball snapped out of end zone), 7:46.				
C —	Dane Winger	1	run (Matthew Panzner kick), 0:00.			
First downs	H	C				
Rushing	27/163	31/105				
Rushing average	6.0	3.4				

tive with Highland having bigger goals in mind this season.

"A lot of our stuff is just working right now, but the thing is we've got to continue to get better every single week," he said. "We can't get too high on ourselves."

Highland's defense held star receiver Andrew McKnight, who entered the game with 484 yards and eight touchdowns, to just 44 yards on three catches. His last catch went for 24 yards and was against the reserves. The Hornets also held running back Bryce Martin to 27 yards on 15 carries.

Winger, the son of former High-

Passing	14/17	7/18
Passing yards	179	84
Total offense	44/342	49/189
Punting	3/45.0	7/36.1
Penalties	4/35	4/33
Fumbles	2/1	2/1
RUSHING: Highland — Myser 8-117, Gibb 3-21, Alden Pulice 2-15, Lazar 6-14, Joseph Orr 3-1, Team 1-0. Frankie Lemmings 3-(-3), Anthony DePompa 1-(-5), Copley — Winger 9-42, Dylan Hargrove 6-33, Bryce Martin 15-27, Carson Manson 1-3.		
PASSING: Highland — Gibb 13-16-175-0, Jonathan Prucha 1-1-0-0, Copley — Winger 7-17-80-1, Warren Brodumayer 1-1-4-0.		
RECEIVING: Highland — Weber 2-32, Lucas Garding 2-34, Dan Miller 1-32, Ben Radigan 2-30, Lazar 1-11, Foust 2-9, Lemmings 2-6, DePompa 2-6, Copley — Andrew McKnight 3-44, Caleb Waniawani 1-15, Jacob Kuczkowski 1-15, Martin 1-6, Manson 1-4.		
MISSED FIELD GOAL: Highland — Kowza 35 (W).		

land basketball great Rob Winger, was the Indians' leading rusher with 42 yards on nine carries. He also completed 7-of-17 passes for 80 yards.

"We practiced a lot for their offense," linebacker Evan Foust said. "They have a really good offense, probably one of the best we've played all year. We came in really confident that we were going to do a good job against them and we did."

Foust made a big tackle to stop Winger on a run attempt on fourth-and-9 in the first quarter. On the very next play, Myser gave Highland a 21-0 lead with a 63-yard touchdown run.

Quarterback Grady Gibb turned in another impressively efficient performance, completing 13-of-16 passes for 175 yards. He twice hooked up with Jake Weber for touchdowns. The first was a 39-yard strike on the first drive and the last was a 13-yard score that gave Highland a 42-0 halftime lead. The Hornets scored touchdowns on their first six possessions.

"It was a great first half," Gibb said. "We made some mistakes, but I think we had a pretty clean half overall. We were just clicking on everything. Me and the receivers are clicking and just having a great connection."

The Indians got on the scoreboard on the first drive of the second half. After forcing Highland to punt, the snap went over Landon Kuzma's head and he kicked it out of the end zone for a safety. Kuzma made two extra points, while Jonah Kowza made four extra points but missed a 35-yard field goal at the end of the first half.

On Copley's first offensive drive of the second half, Winger capped an 80-yard march with a 1-yard run.

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