

The Blitz Week 5

THE BEST OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



HIGHLAND 47,
MEDINA 0



NICK GAMMETT / GAZETTE

Highland's Luke Grillis, right, and Isaac Demming, left, sack Medina's Adam Barr.

Mean Green Machine

Dominant line play powers Hornets to fourth straight victory

Albert Grindle
The Gazette

MEDINA — The trench mafia of the Highland football team had the necessary enforcers to acquire new territory — in this case the FieldTurf at Kenneth Dukes Stadium — Friday night.

Jacob Cirino, Wyatt Sitz, Spencer Marquis, Nolan Farley and Ethan McCarthy headlined an overpower-



Marquis



Foust



Wadle



Colon

ing, efficient offense. Isaac Demming, Lukas Grillis and Jacob Arvenetes

spearheaded a bone-crushing, blanketing defense, and together they

paved the way for a thoroughly impressive 47-0 Suburban League National Conference blowout of Medina in the first league meeting between the Medina County neighbors.

Highland (4-1, 2-0) kicked off the scoring with a safety, set a season high with 424 yards total offense, saw Jonah Kowza annihilate the pigskin on a 48-yard field goal and limited the Bees (1-4, 1-1) to a season-low

166 yards total offense on a crystal-clear September night that was the perfect setting for coach Mike Gibbons' 100th victory at the school.

"I know we had a rough one Week 1 (in a 34-0 loss to Walsh Jesuit), but being able to build off all these wins and come out here and do this to Medina is really awesome," Marquis said. "Every week, the new starters just get better and better."

See HORNETS, C2



NICK GAMMETT / GAZETTE

Highland's Jake Weber (7) and Jonah Kowza celebrate a 48-yard field goal by Kowza.

HORNETS

From C1

It's the effort they're putting in that's showing on varsity film. It's awesome."

Struggling again to tackle at the initial point of attack, Medina's game plan was to limit Highland's bread-and-butter running plays of inside zone, power read and counter. The Hornets line was so overpowering it didn't matter, as a well-balanced running attack often cut across the grain to the backside or ran through tacklers for extra yardage.

The by-committee approach is the blueprint Highland believes it must follow without record-setting Casey Myser, quarterback Grady Gibb and slot receiver Lucas Gerding. Evan Foust (8 carries, 55 yards, 2 TDs), Colton Waddle (6, 34), Colton Winston (4, 36, 2), Levi Clark (4, 34) and Anthony DePompei (3, 17, 1) each had at least three carries, while Ben Radigan (3 catches, 63 yards), Jake Weber (4, 46), Foust (3, 45) and Frankie Iannaghi (3, 30) had at least three receptions apiece.

Waddle again was masterful while improving to 3-0 as starting quarterback, and the sophomore will take a completion streak of 16 heading into next week's game at Stow after finishing 16-for-17 for 214 yards. Only one pass covered more than 19 yards, a 39-yard catch by Radigan in which he maintained possession despite being rocked by a defender on a jump ball.

"(The balance) is very important. It's a team sport, right?" Marquis said. "We've got to get everybody involved just in case, God forbid, somebody gets hurt."

Highland 47, Medina 0

HIGHLAND	16	17	7	7	—	47
MEDINA	0	0	0	0	—	0

H — Safety (Nathan Barran tackled in end zone), 7:19.
H — Colton Winston 3 run (Jonah Kowza kick), 3:24.
H — Winston 14 run (Kowza kick), 2:35.

H — Evan Foust 6 run (Kowza kick), 11:28.
H — Anthony DePompei 1 run (Kowza kick), 4:52.
H — Kowza 48 field goal, 0:00.

H — Foust 5 run (Kowza kick), 8:50.
H — Josh Goldie 15 run (Grayson Swann kick), 6:04.

	H	M
First downs	24	11
Rushing	35/210	18/33
Rushing average	6.0	1.8
Passing	16/17	14/38
Passing yards	214	133
Total offense	52/424	56/166
Punting	1/43.0	4/11.3
Penalties	1/10	1/0
Fumbles	2/1	1/0

RUSHING: Highland — Foust 8-35, Winston 4-36, Colton Waddle 6-34, Levi Clark 4-34, Goldie 2-23, DePompei 3-17, Josh Ori 4-0, Mack O'Neil 1-6, Ethan Ray 2-3, Team 1-(-7), Medina — Kaden Patrick 10-22, Adam Barr 7-9, Noah Brown 1-2.

PASSING: Highland — Waddle 16-17-214-0, Medina — Barr 3-4-13-0, Patrick 11-26-120-0, Grayson Swann 1-1-4-0.

RECEIVING: Highland — Ben Radigan 3-63, Jake Weber 4-46, Foust 3-45, Frankie Iannaghi 3-30, DePompei 2-23, Winston 1-7, Medina — Cooper Sokolowski 6-42, Tyler Wilson 2-34, Ashton Knowles 2-25, Brown 2-21, Bishop Burch 1-17, Nathan Barran 1-(-9).

The defense was just as good, led by Demming's 2½ sacks, Grills' two and Arvenet's half. The Hornets moved Weber from corner to free safety to create a three-high look, while Owen Zielinski stepped in at corner and broke up three passes.

Medina welcomed back quarterback Adam Barr after a one-game absence but went to backup Kaden Patrick in the first half an effort to ignite the offense. They finished a combined 14-for-37 for 139 yards while rushing 17 times for 31 yards, though both were hampered heavily by an uncharacteristically high number of drops that almost equaled Highland's 10 pass breakups.

"Our game plan, we expected some tricks (from Medina)," said Demming, who had his second straight big game after posting a team-high nine tackles vs. Nordon. "This week, they didn't come out with anything new. They're very heavy pass, so we went to a three-man front on the D-line and got after it."

The night got off to a weird start after a 10-play, 71-yard Highland drive ended when Marshal Owings forced a fumble recovered by Bees teammate Evan Colon at the Medina 1-yard line. The Bees then went 5-yard rush, dropped pass, dropped pass, dropped punt snap on the ensuing possession, setting up a sequence in which the punter passed the ball underhand to an up-man who was promptly creamed by the Hornets' Brady Myser for a safety.

Winston then scored from 3 and 14 yards and the rout was on. Foust made the score 23-0 on a 6-yard rush with 11:28 left in the half, DePompei moved to 30-0 on a 1-yard Wildcat run and Kowza's 48-yard field goal at the buzzer even drew an applause from the Medina faithful because it was crushed so perfectly between the uprights with room to spare.

Foust (5-yard run) and Josh Goldie (15) capped the scoring in the second half.

"We're a smaller school, and they're the (second-biggest) school in the county," Demming said. "We really just played as a unit because we're so disciplined. We worked so hard in the offseason that it is showing on the field."

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