

UA coming down stretch full steam ahead

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Not content to merely hang on to the eighth -- and final -- Division I Region 3 football tournament spot, Upper Arlington is dismantling the opposition in the final weeks of the regular season.

The Golden Bears blanked host Grove City 42-0 Friday, Oct. 19, their second shutout in as many weeks and fourth overall in 2007.

"It's definitely a good feeling for our defense," senior defensive end Mikel Berry said. "They've got a big (offensive) line, but they've got some young guys in there and at that age they typically don't have the feet yet.

"We just went out and rushed as hard as we could."

UA (7-2, 3-1 in the Ohio Capital Conference Buckeye Division) hosts Reynoldsburg (3-6, 2-2) at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26, in the regular-season finale for both teams.

Mathematically speaking, a Bears victory would keep them alive in the hunt for an OCC Buckeye co-championship.

While Reynoldsburg has struggled offensively, its defense has remained strong.

"We're going to have to play well," UA coach Mike Golden said. "This week's important.

"It's our senior week, so we want our effort to be dedicated to our seniors. We also want to keep our momentum going into the playoffs."

On the other side of the equation, however, league leading Dublin Coffman (9-0, 4-0) would have to lose to visiting Westerville North (1-9, 0-4) Friday.

The more realistic result of a victory Friday would be a third straight trip to the playoffs under Golden.

Against the Greyhounds (2-7, 1-4), the Bears dominated the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball.

Junior running back Tommy Farwick rushed for 178 yards and four touchdowns to lead the offense.

Farwick only rushed four times in the second half and would have scored a fifth TD, but he fumbled reaching for the end zone midway through the third quarter. Senior receiver Kyle Angelos recovered the ball for UA's fifth score of the evening.

"They handled us on the line of scrimmage -- especially our offense," Grove City coach Scott McIntire said. "We don't have the ability that lets us overcome many errors. We have to nickel and dime everything to the best of our ability.

"Right now we're not playing very good football -- that's the bottom line."

Grove City surprised the Bears early by playing the spread offense exclusively -- most of the time out of a no-huddle attack.

UA defensive backs handled the 'Dawgs' receivers and the front seven harassed quarterback Elijah Smurthwaite relentlessly.

"Our front is so strong -- I know they were probably thinking they had to throw," Golden said. "They ran the spread more tonight in the first half than they did in the first eight games.

"It surprised us, but we've been in so many games doing that -- it was easy to adjust to it."

The game began with the Bears mounting a 14-play drive that stalled at the GC 10-yard line. On the 26-yard field goal attempt, senior kicker Jared Sylvester lost his footing to send the visitors away empty.

Grove City moved the ball on its first possession -- Smurthwaite connecting with junior receiver Cory Martin for a 19-yard completion -- but the Bears' defense made a quick adjustment and didn't allow the home squad past its own 35.

Farwick scored the first of his three first-half TDs on a 5-yard burst with less than a minute remaining in the first quarter. He also scored on runs of 23 and 2 yards to pace a 21-0 halftime lead.

He also scored on a 13-yard run early in the third.

"He's a special player," Golden said. "He's a very tough football player."

Junior running back Isaac Wildermuth completed the scoring with a nifty 65-yard run in the fourth. He was smothered at the line of scrimmage, but managed to break free for the score.