

Upper Arlington intent on moving forward

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Clinging to the eighth -- and final -- spot in the Division I Region 3 football tournament, Upper Arlington (6-2, 2-1 in Ohio Capital Conference Buckeye Division) isn't about to look past Week 9 host Grove City (2-6, 1-2) when the teams square off at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19.

Although the Golden Bears have dominated the all-time series with the 'Dawgs (33-7-1 since 1930), coach Mike Golden only has to look at last year's 14-7 win over GC to realize its bite is usually as bad as its bark.

The Bears were 10-2 in 2006; the 'Dawgs finished 4-6.

"They've got a great tradition and they've got a bunch of seniors who have a lot of pride," Golden said. "It's their last home game, so we know they're going to come out strong.

"Offensively, they can move the ball on almost anybody, so we've got to execute well to give ourselves a chance to win."

UA is coming off a decisive 49-0 win over visiting Westerville North Friday, Oct. 12 -- it's third shutout of the season.

The Bears' running attack has been strong all season, but the boys got a little pass-happy against the Warriors (1-7, 0-3).

Starting quarterback Braden Layer threw two touchdowns to Blake Annen and running back Mark Crawford connected with Anthony Finissi on a 46-yard pass play.

"We know we can run the ball well and we want to stay consistent with that," Golden said. "We also want to continue to make strides throwing the ball.

"For us, the key is to continue to work hard to get better at what we do."

Grove City lost 17-12 at Reynoldsburg in Week 8.

Fullback Brock Snyder (6-feet, 1-inch, 240 pounds) scored on a 1-yard run. Quarterback Elijah Smurthwaite connected with Jason Laborce on a 65-yard pass play for the 'Dawgs other score.

"They run the Wing-T well and they have for years," Golden said. "They're kind of unique in that they mix the play-action pass in there as well as anybody.

"We're an aggressive defensive team, so play action passes can be a challenge for us. We've got to react well on both sides of the ball."

The Bears are still in the hunt for an OCC Buckeye championship, but they'll need some help.

Dublin Coffman remained undefeated in league play with a 21-14 win at Hilliard Davidson Oct. 12.

In the Region 3 playoff picture, Hilliard Darby (10-0) remains the No. 1, with Pickerington Central (10-0) and Dublin Coffman (10-0) rounding out the top three.

Gahanna Lincoln (6-2), Brookhaven (7-1), Worthington Kilbourne (6-2), Lancaster (5-3) and UA

would be make the cut if the playoffs began today.

Looking for help are No. 9 Groveport Madison (5-3) and No. 10 Hilliard Davidson (5-3).

"We have an opportunity to get into the tournament and anytime you have that opportunity, it's exciting," Golden said. "For us to get there, we have to play well at Grove City Friday."