

## FOOTBALL

### Wildcats ready to tackle Bears

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*ThisWeek Staff Writer*

It's a safe bet that Upper Arlington High School football coach Mike Golden has been stressing to his defense the importance of maintaining its assignments Friday against visiting Hilliard Davidson in the OCC-Buckeye Division opener for both teams.

According to Golden, that's the key to containing a triple-option offense, which is what defending Division I state champion Davidson employs.

"They have an excellent quarterback (Connor Dietz) who runs the option very well," said Golden, whose team fell to 4-1 with a 22-7 loss to Hilliard Darby last Friday. "He's a big play-maker for them. We'll have to know our assignments. You have to honor your assignment."

Dietz was the Wildcats' second-leading rusher last season with 834 yards on 158 carries (5.3 yards-per-carry average) and has been just as effective this year. He has rushed for 571 yards, including 203 yards and three touchdowns on 13 carries in a 28-6 win over Thomas Worthington last Friday as Davidson improved to 4-1.

"In high school, if you have a great running quarterback, you've got something," Golden said.

UA faced another quarterback who is just as dangerous with his legs as he is with his arm last Friday in Darby's Jeremy Ebert. The Northwestern recruit ran for 80 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries but had a big passing day as well, completing 15 of 20 for 165 yards.

"They're both great players but they're different quarterbacks," Golden said, referring to Dietz and Ebert.

"I'm not sure how to compare them. But both kids have started in a lot of big games and have a lot of confidence."

The Wildcats' backfield also features fullbacks Clay Trubiano and Ryan Meadows. Trubiano missed three games with a knee injury but returned to the lineup against Thomas. Meadows



BY LORRIE CECIL/THISWEEK  
**Upper Arlington's Jared Sylvester, Danny Nygren and Cooper Dennis get together last Friday after the Golden Bears' 22-7 loss to Hilliard Darby in non-league play.**

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#### Next game

UA vs. HILLIARD DAVIDSON

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Last meeting: 2006, Davidson 17-0 in regional semifinal

Davidson (4-1) to date: Lost to Hilliard Darby 21-10; defeated Brookhaven 14-13; def. Independence 44-9; def. Westland 61-7; def. Thomas Worthington 28-6

Top Wildcats: Lance Anderson, Tyler Backstrom, Joey Ciamacco, Connor Dietz, Jake Dougherty, Ryan Meadows, Matt Rine and Clay Trubiano

Of note: The Wildcats lead the all-time series 8-3 and have won the last six meetings. The Bears' last win in the series was 30-14 in 2002.

stepped up during Trubiano's absence, rushing for a season-high 124 yards and three touchdowns on 13 carries in a 61-7 win over Westland on Sept. 14.

Davidson's top receiver is Joey Ciamacco.

"They are very talented," Golden Bears nose guard Thomas Sauter said of the Wildcats. "All their skill positions are good and they're very good at running the ball. Their quarterback is a very talented athlete. He deserves a lot of respect."

UA will try to get its wing-T offense back on track against Davidson after totaling just 177 yards against Darby. Fullback Tommy Farwick leads the Bears' ground game with 559 yards on 70 carries (8.0 average) and running back Alex Drake has 305 yards on 36 carries (8.5 average). Drake left the game against Darby in the first quarter with an abdominal strain and did not return. As of last Sunday, it was unclear whether Drake would be available for the Davidson game, Golden said.

If Drake can't play, his spot will be filled by Isaac Wildermuth, who has rushed for 238 yards on 33 carries (7.2 average) as a backup running back.

"That's the benefit of getting Isaac a lot of carries early in the season," Golden said. "We know we can count on him to do a good job for us."

"We will have to play much better than we have the entire season," Davidson coach Brian White said. "It will start with practice, having the best week we've had since the start of two-a-days. Each position player as well as all of our special teams positions will have to step up their game from where we have been."

"UA has proven to be very physical on both offense and defense. They are executing better than in past years, as the players on the field now have been in the Mike Golden system long enough to understand what he is looking for. It is obvious that his philosophy on discipline and character are rubbing off on this team. We have all the respect in the world for the job that coach Golden does, and at this point in the season are looking to just compete with UA."

White will not be on the sideline for the game. He was ejected from the Thomas game in the second quarter for arguing a roughing-the-punter penalty against his team and, according to OHSAA regulations, a coach or player who is ejected from a game is ineligible to participate in the next contest.

Assistant Chip Abele was acting coach for the remainder of the Thomas game. Assistant Ryan Aleshire will assume that role against UA.

"(White's assistants) will do their very best for coach White," Golden said. "They're his staff. He picked them, so I know he has confidence in them. I have a great deal of respect for Brian. I really like him on a personal level. I'll miss seeing him across the field."

Davidson leads the all-time series 8-3 and has won the last six, including 19-0 in the regular season and 17-0 in a Division I regional semifinal. The Wildcats won the league. The Bears' last win in the series was 30-14 in 2002.

"In my whole high-school career, we haven't beaten Davidson," Sauter said. "But we're looking to get a win against them this year."

The winner of Friday's contest will take a big step toward the OCC-Buckeye championship as well as a playoff berth.

"Both teams are in the same boat," Golden said. "It's a big game with league and playoff implications."