



Photos: Go Time Sports Productions

The Villa Grove Blue Devils take the field for their Friday Night football game against Cerro Gordo/Bement. The Blue Devils were able to stay ahead in the tight game for a 42-35 victory.

Villa Grove Blue Devils outlast Cerro Gordo Bement in Friday night thriller

By Tony Hooker

The Villa Grove Blue Devils kicked off their Lincoln Prairie Conference football season with a hard fought 42-35 home win over Cerro Gordo Bement on Friday, September 10.

The Blue Devils got things started in the first quarter, when an offsides penalty against the Broncos gave them new life on their initial drive of the contest. Liam Barr (10-20 for 186 yards and three TD's) found Brady Clodfelder from 20 yards out for the touchdown. Daelin Price's extra point attempt was good, and with 7:12 left in the opening period, the score stood at 7-0. After Robert Fancher (two tackles) broke up a fourth down pass attempt by the Broncos, giving the home squad possession at their own 39, the Blue Devils struck quickly as Barr found Elijah Kiesel on a wheel route for 47 yards to the CGB 14. A false start penalty and a two-yard loss on a running play made it second and 17 from the Bronco 21, and Barr again targeted Kiesel (four catches for 106 yards, two TD's) who hauled it in for the score.

Price's kick again split the uprights, and VG's lead was extended to 14-0 with 11:12 left in the half.

The Broncos would not lay down, however, and Cody Layfield (19 carries for 208 yards, two TD's) scored on a 65-yard gallop up the middle on the Broncos second play of the possession. After their extra point attempt snuck over the crossbar, the score stood at VG 14-CGB 7.

This time disaster struck for the home forces, as Barr's pass overshot his intended receiver and ended up in the hands of a Bronco defender at their 11-yard line. Layfield then went 89 yards on the first play of the drive to make it 14-13 VG, and it remained a one point Blue Devil advantage after they blocked the extra point attempt.

A 26 yard kickoff return by Gunner Cline (three returns for 84 yards) set VG up at their own 48 to start the drive, and a series of hard-fought runs by Parker Stevens (nine carries for 48 yards in the contest) and Kiesel (five carries for 15 yards) moved the ball into Bronco territory at the 40. Luke Zimmerman (15 carries for 185

yards and two TD's) did Luke Zimmerman things, slicing and dicing for 38 yards to the Bronco two, and from there, Barr powered it in for the score. Once again, Price's extra point attempt was good, and with 5:44 left in the half the scoreboard read VG 21-CGB 13.

After the Blue Devil defense, led by Tyler Wilson (five tackles, 1.5 for loss) forced a Bronco punt, the Blue Devils took possession at their own 24. Barr (eight carries for 26 yards and one TD), finding no one open, was able to scramble for 16 yards and a big first down on third and ten to keep the drive alive. A pair of Barr completions to Braydon Dowler (three catches for 37 yards) helped move the ball to the CGB 36, where, facing fourth down, Barr was able to avoid defensive pressure and toss a heave toward the end zone, where Kiesel made an acrobatic, diving catch for the touchdown. Again, Price's kick was true, and the score stood at 28-13, where it remained at the half.

A squibbed kick by Price to open the third quarter gave CGB good field posi-

tion at the 46, and it took just two plays for the Broncos to reach the end zone after a 44 yard option keeper by QB Colin Warren moved the ball to the VG two. Warren then scored on a sneak on the ensuing play, and after Layfield bulled in with the two-point conversion, the score stood at VG 28-CGB 21.

The invigorated Broncos then picked off another Barr pass, and on third and 19, Warren was able to find a streaking Layfield for 33 yards to the Blue Devil four-yard line, where Brady Clodfelder (two solos, four assists) forced him out of bounds. After a Layfield run moved the ball to the one, Warren again called his own number, sneaking it in for the score with eight minutes left in the quarter. The CGB extra point attempt was no good, and the score stood at VG28-CGB 27, with all momentum seemingly on the Bronco side.

The Broncos then used a mix of runs and passes to move the ball to the VG 19, where, facing fourth and seven, they went for the end zone, only to have Clodfelder break it up and regain pos-

session for the home team, at their own 19. From there, the Blue Devils mounted a 12 play, 81 yard drive that consumed five minutes and 42 seconds of clock, culminating in a six-yard dive by Luke Zimmerman with 6:50 remaining in the contest. This time, the Blue Devils outfoxed the Broncos on the point after, as holder Layne Runt was able to spin to his right and find a wide-open Parker Stevens for the two-point conversion, making the score 36-27 in favor of Villa Grove.

Once again, the Broncos refused to quit, taking just two plays to score, this time on a 58 yard bomb from Warren to Chance Young. A two-point conversion run by Layfield made it VG-36-CGB 35 with 5:54 remaining.

Cline's 33 yard kickoff return set the Blue Devils up at the Broncos 40, but Barr, being pressured, was once again intercepted, giving the Broncos possession with a chance to take the lead. This time, however, the Devils Defense stuffed three straight Bronco runs, forcing a punt which rolled dead at the VG 21. A direct snap

to Zimmerman gained four yards, and on the next play, another direct snap, Zimmerman ducked, dodged and outran the CGB defense for a 75 yard TD down the Bronco sideline. A special teams snafu led to the Devils being forced to use their final time outs, and after Price's extra point attempt was no good, the VG lead stood at 42-35 with 2:20 left in the game.

Three quick completions led the Broncos into Blue Devil territory, but a huge sack by Elijah Kiesel and AJ Jensen, resulting in a nine-yard loss, forced CGB into a third and 19 situation from the VG 44. A third down pass fell incomplete, forcing a fourth down pass completion, but Barr's sure tackle stopped the Bronco receiver well short of the first down marker at the 40, and from there the Devils were able to assume victory formation and run out the clock. Villa Grove returns to action on September 17 with a 7 p.m. home contest versus Argenta Oreana.

COMMUNITY

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went back to church for a few weeks. That stopped after a couple months. While the 9/11 anniversary causes an upsurge in patriotism, I don't think it resonates with people spiritually.

Did that day change you in any way?

While it was devastating, and I pray it never happens again, my trust was then, and still is, in God for protection and justice. I don't always understand God's will. Or why bad things happen to good people. Or, why God allows evil in the world. I believe that God is sovereign over everything and always does what is good. If anything, 9/11 just reminded me that our physical battles are always rooted in a spiritual battle.

Duane Piercy, Victory Church

Where were you and what were you doing when you first heard?

I was building a house in Cherry Hills in Champaign when Cheryl called me to tell me what was happening. I went out in my truck to listen to the events on the radio.

What was your immediate reaction?

My initial reaction was horror and disbelief. It felt as if an evil we have never known before, had descended on our world.

How did your organization respond?

We called for a special evening of prayer where many people from different

churches, and faith walks came together to lift up our nation, and all the people affected by the tragedy. It was such a time of uncertainty that we realized we needed to come together as a community to be there for one another and pray.

Do you think the events of that day still resonate?

Yes absolutely. Especially with the U.S. military's recent withdrawal from Afghanistan, I believe now more than ever, 9/11's influence has yet to disappear. I think we all have a sense that another terror attack is quite possible.

Did that day change you in any way?

I think it made me more aware. It made me more aware of the evil in our world and against our country. I know that my youngest son, and grandchildren will never know the innocence about threat and danger within America. At the same time, I have a deeper appreciation for the real heroes who serve and those who have died, to protect our American freedoms. I also saw the best of America as the many first responders, and volunteers courageously showed us what bravery looked like.

Jackie Wells, Camargo District Township Library

Do you remember exactly where you were and what you were doing when you first became aware of the horrific terrorist action on 9/11?

I had dropped my kids at school (I worked nights at the U of I back then) and was headed home to go to bed.

When I got home the TV was on and they were showing the first tower had been hit by a plane, and I was so worried because my brother and his partner were both flight attendants with Northwest

What was your immediate reaction?

I called my mom, and we were both trying to see if they were flying that day. Then minutes later the second tower was struck, and I did not sleep that day, I stayed glued to the TV watching the horrors of that day unfold on national TV. Just typing this I have tears welling up just remembering; needless to say, I went to my shift that night mental and physically exhausted.

How did your organization respond?

We were all in shock.

Do you think the events of that day still resonate?

I wish our country still had the same solidarity today they did in the months that followed that horrible day. I hope it doesn't take something like this to happen again for us to get back to being one nation under God.

Did that day change you in any way?

My husband and I visited the flight 93 memorial in Pennsylvania a couple of years ago and listening to the last recorded messages of some of those brave souls was heartbreaking. I am so thankful that my brother and brother-in-law were not flying that day but so sad for those families that could not say the same. Never forget!



Photos: Go Time Sports Productions

Villa Grove junior high softball team took on Danville-Schlarman in the junior high regional on September 8. The Blue Devils took home with a 17-2 win.



Photo: Go Time Sports Productions

The Villa Grove junior high baseball team huddles during their baseball game against Westville on September 8. The Blue Devils lost against the Tigers 11-3.