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Villa Grove Sports Wrap

Volleyball

Clawed by Tigers

Villa Grove fought valiantly but dropped a 23-25, 21-25 decision to Westville on September 18. Westville's record improved to 17-1 with the win. Alexis Cassano led the Devils with 6 kills, while Jobella Crafton put away 4 of her own. Kayln Cordes passed out 10 assists and Carly Eads dished out 6 to key the VGVB attack. Defensively, Eads and Alison Pangburn got under 8 digs each.

Joust Knights

Villa Grove defeated Blue Ridge in straight sets, 25-23, 25-9 on September 19. Jobella Crafton led the way, powering down 7 kills and digging 7 Knights attempts. Madison Hinds chipped in with 4 kills and a pair of blocks, Carly Eads handed out 9 assists and Kayln Cordes dished out 7 of her own.

Girls' golf

Fall to Warriors

Ella Schweighart fired a 91, good to earn co-medalist honors along with Tuscola's Addyson Ring as the Blue Devils dropped a tight 219-224 match to the Warriors on September 18. Logan Lillard's 48 was good for third, and Addie Wilson's 60 and Lila Thomp-

son Burton's 69 rounded out the Blue Devils scoring.

Finish 5th at Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament

Ella Schweighart fired a 91, good for 4th place and all-conference standing, to lead the team at the LPC conference match, held on September 19 at Moweaqua. Logan Lillard had a 114, Addie Wilson chipped in with a 117 and Lila Thompson Burton shot a 144 for VGHS.

Boys' golf

Defeat Salt Fork

Karder Kirkman's 45 earned medalist honors and helped lead Villa Grove to a 199-211 win over Salt Fork on September 18. Jackson Smith's 48 tied for the second-best round on the day. Cole Price shot a 50, Cooper Price came in with a 56, and Brody Sanders fired a 67 to round out the Blue Devils score card.

Finish 4th at Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament

Karder Kirkman fired an 89, good enough to finish 6th overall and earn all-conference honors as the Blue Devils took home 4th place. Jackson Smith's 96, Cole Price's 98 and Cooper Price's 121 rounded out the team scoring effort.

Junior high cross country

St. Joseph Middle school invite

Reece Vandeventer, Miles Swigart and RJ Mitsdarfer each earned medalist honors at the prestigious event.

5th/6th grade boys

Reece Vandeventer toured the two-mile St. Joseph Middle School Invitational circuit in 13:24 to earn a 6th place finish on September 22nd. Emmitt Mitsdarfer ran 24th, and Cooper Leith finished in 30th place for the Blue Devils. Ethan Parr cruised to a 47th place finish in the 75-runner field.

7th/8th grade boys

Miles Swigart and Robert Mitsdarfer finished in 17th and 18th place respectively for VGJH. Thomas Linstead finished 63rd, Ethan Vail ran 65th, Carter Leith came in 79th and Max Kneer ran to an 82nd place finish in the race, which featured 93 athletes.

5th/6th grade girls

Julie Swigart's 25th place finish led the Devils' efforts. Avery Kameron backed her with a 37th place effort, and Rylan Burris finished 44th.

7th/8th grade girls

Teaghan Henderson was the lone competitor for VG, finishing 56th with a time of 19:57.36.



LILA BESSENT (25) spikes the ball during the Sept. 21 JV volleyball game. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

Blue Devils win inaugural Ghere Bowl

By Tony Hooker

Whenever anyone discusses the history of Douglas County, one family, the Ghere family, is almost always near the top of the discussion. The Ghere family of Arcola is legend, not only due to their exploits on the gridiron, but also because of their selfless service to our country during World War II, when seven brothers, Donnie, George, Harry, Russell, Bobby, John, and Jim, served. Upon returning to Illinois after the War, Russell earned a master's degree at EIU before beginning a teaching and coaching career that led him to Villa Grove, where he was a teacher and coach from 1958 until 1984. Because of the Ghere family's close ties to both communities, a new trophy, the Ghere Bowl trophy, has been created and will travel between the schools from this year forward.

As for the game, the Blue Devils were able to defeat the Purple Riders 21-14 by way of a staunch defensive effort and a strong running attack, mixing in timely passes.

Villa Grove took possession of the opening kick off at their own 43 and advanced to the Arcola 15 before two straight incompletions led to a turnover on downs. The Riders flipped the field in just 3 plays, with Ghere descendant Oden Barron taking a counter play and scooting 70 yards into the VG endzone, staking Arcola to a 7-0 lead at the 4:06 mark of the first quarter.

The Blue devils responded with a 15 play, 83-yard scoring march culminating in a 2-yard plunge from Gunner Cline, who would finish the night with 53 yards on 18 carries and the TD. Sophia Shaw's extra point try was true, and with 10:27 left in the half, the game was knotted at 7. The two teams then traded possessions, with a promising Villa Grove drive being

thwarted at the Purple Rider 17, just before halftime. The Riders then were able to move the ball to their own 43 before time expired, leaving the score at 7-7 after 2 quarters of play.

Having deferred the opening kickoff, Arcola received the kick to start the third quarter and the Blue Devils defense was able to force a turnover on an ill-conceived punt/run option by the Riders' Brody Phillips, with Mason Carter falling on the errant attempt at the Arcola 29. The Blue Devils, however, couldn't capitalize as Layne Rund's first down pass was intercepted by Barron and returned to the 22.

Arcola then moved the ball to the 40 before Noah Wilcoxon alertly sniffed out a fake punt and stopped Phillips just shy of the line to gain, giving the Blue Devils first down at the Arcola 38. Wilcoxon finished the game with 5 tackles for VGHS.

This time the Blue Devils would capitalize on their good field position, taking 7 plays to move the ball into the Rider endzone, with Hunter Butts crashing over the left side from 1 yard out. Shaw's extra point try was again good, and with 3:09 left in the third, the score stood at 14-7 in favor of Villa Grove. Butts would finish the evening with 10 carries for 41 yards and a touchdown.

The teams would once again trade possessions, with an Arcola punt rolling dead at the Devils' 24. Unable to generate any offense, VG dropped into punt formation on the second play of the 4th quarter, only to have disaster befall them when a high snap forced Parker Knierim to punt into the teeth of the onrushing Riders, with Arcola taking possession at the Blue Devil 7-yard line. The defense stood strong for three plays before Phillips, scrambling to his left, found his brother Braden, who had

broken free in the corner of the endzone. Gael Elizondo's extra point try flew true, and with 9:46 remaining in the contest, the game was once again tied, 14-14.

Villa Grove's Wilcoxon then returned the kickoff to the VG 40, where the Blue Devils went to work. A Butts run netted 5. Butts was then stoned on a second down run, setting up 3rd and 5 at the 45. The Blue Devils tried a screen to Mason Carter, but Arcola snuffed it out for no gain, bringing up 4th and 5, and this is when the Blue Devils made the play of the game. On 4th and 5, the offensive line gave Rund plenty of time to scan the field, and he calmly hit tight end Kyler Williams who caught 3 passes for 85 yards on the night, streaking down the middle. Williams then drug a host of Riders an additional 10 yards before being pulled down at the 7. The 48-yard pass from Rund, who would finish the night 15-26 for 140 yards, ended up being the longest play of the night for Villa Grove. Two plays went backwards for the Blue Devils before Rund found Wilcoxon from 9 yards out for the score. Once more, Shaw's P.A.T. sailed through the uprights, and with 6:08 remaining in the contest the score stood at 21-14 in favor of Villa Grove.

The Devils defense, led by Zach Wells, who had 10 tackles on the evening, and Parker Knierim, who finished with 9 stops, then stiffened and forced the Riders to turn the ball over on downs on their last two possessions. Jonathan Kiser had six tackles as well for the Blue Devils, whose record improved to 2-3 with the win. Villa Grove will next see action with a Homecoming tilt versus Cerro Gordo Bement on September 29. Arcola will hit the road for a 7 pm contest at Cumberland on the same evening.



BLUE DEVIL GUNNER CLINE (17) carries the ball as Purple Rider Tyson Lewis (9) tries to tackle him during the Sept. 22 1st Annual Ghere Bowl game. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



KARDER KIRKMAN won 6th place for Villa Grove boys golf at the LPC conference golf tournament. Ella Schweighart won 4th place for Villa Grove girls golf at the LPC conference golf tournament on Sept. 19. Submitted photo.