

Underclassmen earning their way

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HEATH — After a 3-0 start, the Heath football team has dropped its last two games, including a 48-7 defeat at home against Zanesville in Week 5.

“They were extremely fast, physical and hungry,” Heath coach Tim Ward said of the Blue Devils. “We are working through some discipline issues as well as just having a consistent approach to the game. Things like route running, linemen taking the right steps, and defensive line hand placement.”

The veteran Blue Devils handled the younger Heath team, but Ward saw a silver lining in his underclassmen.

“We had a number of young guys stepping up, due to a lack of depth in the junior class,” Ward said. “One of those guys was Hayden Woodward, who moved from backup quarterback to offensive line. We had a few kids penciled in to battle it out for the right tackle position, but we were not getting what we needed to play at the level we needed.”

Woodward was a freshman standout on the Heath baseball team last spring and showed he is not afraid of the big stage.

“In early August, I approached him about a possible move,” Ward said. “He said if us coaches thought it was best for the team, he was all in. He has been doing a great job getting better each week since then.”

With classmate Brayden Bayles learning the ropes at quarterback, Woodward is now filling a void protecting him.

“It was definitely a weird move for me, but not too difficult,” Woodward said, “I played some lineman growing up. When coach asked me if I would be willing to move to the line to help the team out, I knew it was going to be strange learning the footwork and moves again, but all of our coaches helped me out.”

Ward also praised the play of defensive back Paul Gould. He didn’t fill the stat sheet Friday night, but Ward said Gould played “physical” and is “an absolute competitor.”

“It’s pretty cool being able to be one of the guys on the team that the coaches



Heath freshman Jahki Royster attempts to find running room during last Friday’s game against Zanesville.

MICHAEL LEHMKUHLE/THE ADVOCATE

Schedule, results

Aug. 20: **Heath 20**, Liberty Union 13
Aug. 27: **Heath 26**, Fairfield Union 14
Sept. 3: **Heath 45**, Circleville 0
Sept. 10: Granville 21, **Heath 12**
Sept. 17: Zanesville 48, **Heath 7**

can trust,” Gould said. “Being a sophomore and making an impact on varsity is a dream for me.”

Chase Armstead, who normally starts on the offensive line, played a lot

Sept. 24: @Lakewood

Oct. 1: @Utica

Oct. 8: Northridge

Oct. 15: @Newark Catholic

Oct. 22: Johnstown

of defense for the Bulldogs on Friday, as did classmate Noah Sprague.

“Reece Shriner moved to center on only one day of practice, and played well,” Ward said.

“Tanner Patterson started at linebacker as a freshman.”

Heath begins Licking County League-Cardinal Division play in Week 6 on the road against Lakewood (0-5).

“Every game matters from here on out. It is our title to defend. Everyone will be trying to knock us off,” Ward said. “We need to get back to running the football and getting downhill.”

Senior tailback Ar’Moni McCrae was held to 49 yards on 10 carries as the lopsided score made the Bulldogs one-dimensional. McCrae has 333 yards on 56 carries with six touchdowns at the midway point this season.