

OV sets up battle of unbeaten teams

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Otter Valley's Brady Diaz (29) stiff arms Mill River's Toby Pytlik (52) during Saturday's football game in Brandon.

Photo by Brenna Jepson



Mill River's Ryan Smith (25) looks to tackle Otter Valley's Keevon Parks (20) during Saturday's football game in Brandon.

Photo by Brenna Jepson



Mill River's Desmond Krakowka (88) looks to catch Otter Valley quarterback Luca Polli during Saturday's football game in Brandon.

Photo by Brenna Jepson



Mill River's Kyle McGinnis forces Otter Valley's Caleb Whitney (5) to fumble during Saturday's football game in Brandon.

Photo by Brenna Jepson



Mill River's Adam Shum (45) looks to break a tackle from an Otter Valley player during Saturday's football game in Brandon.

Photo by Brenna Jepson

BRANDON — The Otter Valley football team moved the ball overland and through the air in beating Mill River 37-6 in Saturday's Homecoming game. By doing so, the Otters set up the state's marquee game this week against Windsor in Brandon, a matchup of 4-0 teams.

Luca Polli, the triggerman of the OV offense, moved the team efficiently, completing 10 of 16 passes for 232 yards and a couple of touchdowns.

His stable of backs was the perfect complement to the passing game. Caleb and Isaac Whitney and Kevon Parks headlined a cast that meant the Otters were able to distribute the load and keep the ball carriers' legs fresh.

The huge homecoming crowd was into the game from the beginning and it did not hurt that the Otters scored on the day's first possession.

Polli had key completions to Parks and Isaac Whitney on the march and Brady Diaz capped it by plunging into the end zone from two yards out.

Whitney ran the ball for the two-point conversion.

Polli set the tone in that opening quarter by going 5 for 5 for 71 yards.

"He's cool. He keeps us calm for a sophomore," head coach Kipp Denis said of his quarterback.

Polli had a 9-yard run on a keeper early in the second quarter and Diaz ran the ball in for the two points and a 16-0 lead.

Polli connected with Caleb Whitney for a 38-yard scoring pass to push the halftime score to 22-6. He got the ball to Whitney on an out pattern and Whitney outraced the defenders down the sideline.

Mill River's Connor Lopiccolo, outstanding on both sides of the ball, made the tackle to deny the conversion attempt.

OV's Derek Raymond had a sack on third down to help the Otters get the ball back and they put together a scoring drive that culminated with Isaac Whitney's five-yard TD run. Polli threw a strike to Babcock for the two points, putting the Otters ahead 30-6 with 8:27 remaining in the third quarter.

OV's last score was a 43-yard touchdown pass from Polli to Parks and the PAT was good.

Mill River was very much in the game after quarterback Owen Traynor connected with Keegan Greeley on a 60-yard TD pass to close the score to 16-6.

The Otter Valley defender tried to jump the route but got neither the ball or any piece of Greeley. The receiver found himself with nothing but green grass ahead of him and sped to the end zone.

The pass for the two points fell incomplete.

That was the momentum the winless Minutemen needed but it was quickly extinguished by the TD strike from Polli to Caleb Whitney.

Traynor finished 4 of 8 for 91 yards before giving way to Anthony Cavalieri.

Now, comes the anticipated showdown with Windsor.

"Embrace the challenge," OV assistant coach Jordan Tolar said to the players after the game. "They're coming to our house, don't forget that."

Denis knows which team is the underdog next week and it's not the Yellow Jackets.

"I love being the underdog," Denis told the players.

Mill River coach Greg Lewis said after the game that his already smallish roster is getting decimated with injuries.

"It seems like we have more and more each day," Lewis said.

"It's about having fun now."

The fun could be enhanced with a win on Saturday when Oxbow comes to North Clarendon.

Denis credited Mill River for shutting down the Otters' big-play wide receiver Brady Diaz.

"I am proud of the kids. Now, we get to play a great football team, a storied football team," Denis said.

Denis gave accolades to his guys in the trenches who he felt were a big piece of this victory, mentioning Wyatt Fitzgerald, center Luciano Falco, Tanner Brutkowski, Brighton McKeighan and John Coleman.

The hallways at OVUHS should be buzzing this week. Windsor's coming to town.