



Vacaville High School football team knocked out of playoffs by Rio Linda

By Matt Miller | Vacaville Reporter | November 22, 2013

RIO LINDA - Big comeback, then big disappointment.

Vacaville High School's football team fought its way back in the second half, only to watch as Rio Linda scored two touchdowns in the final 2:16 to earn a 31-21 victory. The No. 2 Knights held off the upset bid by the No. 7 Bulldogs in the second round of the Sac-Joaquin Section Division II playoffs Friday night.

Marcel Brown capped a brilliant night for Rio Linda with a 24-yard touchdown run with 2:16 to play. Vacaville fumbled on its next series, and two plays later, Leonard Skattebo ran 35 yards for another score.

That ended another strong Bulldogs' season with a final record of 8-4.

"We had our chance with a couple of minutes left and didn't close the door," Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos said. "That's what you can expect from a great team. They did what they had to do."

Vacaville trailed 17-7 at halftime before starting the comeback. Demetrius Nunez scored on a 9-yard touchdown run with 3:13 left in the third quarter, set up by an interception from Reid Ramirez. The Bulldogs scored again with 10:56 left in the game when quarterback Chad Hekking hit Tanner Donaldson with a 54-yard scoring strike.

But Vacaville could get no closer. The Bulldogs punted on one series, fumbled another and then ran out of time.

Brown rushed 29 times for 226 yards and three touchdowns for Rio Linda. His touchdowns went for 19, 8 and 24 yards. Jonathan Tafoya kicked a field goal and four extra points.

Vacaville took the early 7-0 lead in the first quarter on a 1-yard touchdown run by Damonte Moore. It was set up by a 54-yard pass from Hekking to Donaldson. Kicker Alberto Escobedo converted three extra points.

Donaldson finished with four catches for 123 yards. Hekking threw for 188 yards total. Vacaville netted only 103 yards on the ground between seven ballcarriers, one of which was not Monticello Empire League player of the year David Mewborn.

Mewborn suffered a leg injury last week against Rocklin and was not available.

"I'm proud of them," Papadopoulos said. "They tried the best they could and didn't panic. They played like they should to keep us close."

Vacaville had big players on defense. Chris Irving recovered a fumble and had a sack. Wyatt Faulkner, Kane Cunningham, Connor Kanellis, Dulon Stevens, Daniel Mewborn and Drew Chitwood all had tackles behind the line of scrimmage

."We played our hearts out," Kannellis said. "We did the best we could."

The Knights rushed for 323 yards. They were tough to tackle with the power Skattebo and the speedy Brown. Quarterback Stephen Andrews threw for 84 yards.

Rio Linda (11-1) moves on to play Elk Grove in the semifinals. Elk Grove defeated Burbank 18-12.