



Slow start, big homecoming finish for Vacaville High School football team

For most of the first quarter, this was anything but a happy homecoming.

Vacaville High School's football team would love a mulligan on the first seven minutes of its homecoming game with Berkeley. But then again, the stumbling start made the rest of Friday night's 58-22 victory over visiting Berkeley look that much better.

The Bulldogs fell behind 8-0 and very nearly gave up a second touchdown, but then erupted for six touchdowns in the next 16 minutes of clock time. As a result, almost every player in uniform contributed in some way as Vacaville snapped a two-game losing streak and finished its nonleague season at 2-3.

"We overcame kind of a slow start," Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos understated. "We had a little positioning issue on defense, but we got that fixed quickly, and once we did that the kids played all right."

Vacaville took charge with 22 unanswered points in the second quarter, as Chris Wood scored on runs of 20 and 18 yards. Freshman Derriyon Jack also scored twice, on runs of two and seven yards, as the Bulldogs turned an 8-8 first-quarter tie into a 30-8 halftime advantage.

After Kaytlin Quijas was crowned homecoming queen during the intermission, the Bulldogs added two quick TDs before reserves took over for the rest of the night.

Troy Claunch hit Jon Donaldson with a 68-yard touchdown strike on the first play of the second half.

The Bulldogs also reached the end zone on their next play. After Nate Villalobos scooped up a bad pitch by the Yellowjackets and returned it 20 yards to the Berkeley 12-yard line, Daniel Wright scooted around the left end and scored for a 44-8 lead.

Wright finished with 137 yards rushing on just nine attempts. His score came on his only carry after halftime.

Willie Haynes chipped in a 9-yard scoring run, and Adrian Pena completed the scoring outburst when he recovered a loose ball in Berkeley's end zone after Brandon Mingus blocked a Yellowjackets' punt.

All told, the Bulldogs scored 50 points in less than 20 minutes of clock time in the second and third periods.

The onslaught wiped out a horrific start by the home team.

Berkeley took the opening kickoff and marched 60 yards in seven plays, with Marlon Fountain going the final five yards. A 2-point run by Draysean Hudson made the score 8-0.

Vacaville fumbled on its second play from scrimmage, and the Yellowjackets drove to the Vacaville 9-yard line before the Bulldog defense stiffened.

"We just got more aggressive," defensive lineman Jacob Carpenter explained. "We came together as a team.

"This probably boosts our self-esteem. It was a good night."

Despite the bad beginning. After Berkeley turned the ball over on downs, the Bulldogs drove 92 yards in eight plays, with Jack finishing the march with a 2-yard dive. Gabe Caravantes hit Reese Peterson with a 2-point conversion pass to tie the score.

The defense forced another punt, and Vacaville followed with a 78-yard drive in just seven plays ... all runs ... punctuated by Wood's 20-yard score.

Vacaville's defense forced Berkeley's offense to go three-and-out on its next three possessions, and Isiah Edwards intercepted a Yellowjackets' pass on the fourth Berkeley drive.

Kyle Castro and Jacob Abramowicz joined Carpenter and others in leading the Vacaville defense, which allowed just 15 yards on 23 combined plays in the second and third quarters after giving up 83 yards on the Yellowjackets' first 16 snaps.

Vacaville opens the Monticello Empire League season at Rodriguez next week.