



Vacaville knocks off No. 1 Buhach Colony 27-17

By Mike Corpus | Daily Republic | November 25, 2011

ATWATER — In a matchup of two powerful offensive teams, it came down to defense.

For the Vacaville High football team, that meant holding No. 1 Buhach Colony to three points into the fourth quarter en route to a 27-17 victory for the No. 4 Bulldogs in the Sac-Joaquin Section Division II semifinals at Atwater High.

The win gives Vacaville a berth in next week's SJS Division II championship game at Sacramento State, where the Bulldogs will take on Folsom, which knocked Vacaville out last year with a 75-6 drubbing in the second round of playoff action.

It's also the fourth win in four semifinal appearances for the Bulldogs (12-1)

"We're just so ecstatic to be going back," said Vacaville coach Mike Papadopoulos, who led the team to the 2006 section crown. "The offense did a nice job, but the defense was lights out. They did an outstanding job against an outstanding team."

From the get-go, the Bulldogs were all over the Thunder offense, stuffing the run and breaking up passes at will.

Buhach had just 154 yards at the break and Vacaville led 13-3.

Both defenses battled through a scoreless first quarter before the Bulldogs broke through, capping a 58-yard drive with Curtis Goins' 10-yard dash up the middle, making a second-effort lunge at the goal line for the score. Reed White's kick made it 7-0 with 9 minutes, 41 seconds to play in the half.

The Thunder responded right away, settling for a 42-yard field goal after failing to convert on third-and-3 from the 25.

A failed fourth-down attempt gave Vacaville the ball at the Buhach 23 and three plays later, quarterback Coleman Christensen hit T.J. Fischer in the left corner of the end zone for a 22-yard TD pass and the 13-3 advantage.

On the Thunder's final possession of the half, the Bulldogs defense forced a fumble and lineman Johnny Schupp scooped up the ball.

"I'm really proud of their performance tonight," Papadopoulos said.

Vacaville blew the game open in the third adding rushing scores by Melvin Mason (7 yards) and Terrance Trueblood (2 yards) for a 27-3 lead.

Mason finished the night with 50 yards on 18 carries, while Goins added 136 yards on 26 carries. Trueblood added 46 yards on six carries.

Goins also caught three passes for 39 yards.

Fischer hauled in four passes for 77 yards.

Buhach finally got its offense going in the final 12 minutes, scoring two unanswered touchdowns on drives of 52 and 50 yards, and recovering the kickoff onside after the final TD.

With penalties and one final stop by the Bulldogs defense, the Thunder moved the ball a total of three yards before turning it over on downs with 1:51 to play.

It was an emotional night for the Vacaville seniors, especially Mason, who made no effort to hide his tear-streaked face.

"I've been waiting for this my whole life," he said. "My class, we've been working for this for four years."

He was also effusive in his praise for the defense.

"Our coaches said the defense was going to win the game for us, and they did," Mason said.

Now the road gets really tough.

Facing No. 6 Folsom, will be no easy chore.

"We have to have a really good practice this week, and we have to make sure we get everybody healthy," Goins said.

Folsom knocked off No. 2 Elk Grove 42-28 Friday.

“We’ll just do as much as we can” Papadopoulos said. “That Folsom game last year made us a much better football team and a much better program.”