



## Vacaville downs Davis in season opener

By Matt Sieger | Vacaville Reporter | March 20, 2021

The Vacaville Bulldogs just wanted to play football — anywhere.

With the fall season moved to spring due to COVID, the Bulldogs were scheduled to open their Monticello Empire League season against Fairfield High on the road Friday night. But the Falcons are unable to field a team this season, so the Bulldogs found another opponent, the Davis Blue Devils, for a non-conference road matchup, which they won 28-21.

“Defensively we played really well throughout the entire night,” said Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopolous. “They kept us in until the offense was able to get some type of a rhythm going.”

After the Blue Devils took a 21-14 lead in the fourth quarter on a 20-yard pass play, Vacaville struck back with a 28-yard touchdown run by Darian Leon-Guerrero to tie the game at 21-all.

Late in the quarter, Leon-Guerrero struck again with a 29-yard TD run for the winning score.

Leon-Guerrero, a junior, had a huge night on the ground, racking up 171 yards on 19 carries with four rushing touchdowns.

Vacaville drew first blood in the first quarter when Leon-Guerrero scored on a 39-yard dash on his first carry. Davis countered with a 58-yard TD pass to Donovan Garvin to knot things up at 7-7.

A 33-yard pass play in the second quarter pushed Davis to a 14-7 lead.

Neither team could score in the third quarter. Davis had a seven-minute drive and the teams had few possessions. But Vacaville started out the final stanza with a 22-yard TD

scamper by Leon-Guerrero to knot the score at 14-all. Then came the fourth quarter back-and-forth fireworks.

Davis had one last chance after Vacaville's final score with about a minute left to play. The Blue Devils executed a solid drive, but it stalled on around the 20-yard line as time expired.

Vacaville is transitioning this year to a spread system from many years in a wing T offense.

"With our system that we're evolving into right now and just being in a regular environment took a little bit of time," said Papadopolous. "But there were some nice shades of getting into a good rhythm and then it worked out for us."

The coach was pleased with the play of junior quarterback Ryan Vaughan, who was making his varsity debut. He was 13-for-24 for 166 yards passing.

"Once he settled down and was seeing the entire field, things started to click all the way around," said Papadopoulos. "Early on just the first time that he has done this in a full regular game he was trying to do too much, and then he just really settled down and started managing the game better."

Vaughan spread the ball around, connecting with six different receivers. Vacaville kicker Ariel Till converted all four of his extra-point attempts.

The Blue Devils were a tough opening opponent.

"Davis is very well coached and have had some really good athletes in their program as well and they manage the game well," said Papadopolous.

Now the Bulldogs get ready for their first MEL contest next Friday when they host Armijo at their newly refurbished Tom Zunino Stadium.