



Vacaville earns date in section title game

December 2, 2006 - Terrance Dailey finished what he started.

The Vacaville High School junior running back rushed for a 70-yard touchdown on the first offensive play of the game and all but finished Elk Grove with a rare sack, his first since the second week of the season against Laguna Creek.

Dailey got his single-season school rushing record – on that very first run en route to 165 yards overall – and the Bulldogs got their win, a 16-7 triumph against the Thundering Herd in the Sac-Joaquin Section Division I semifinals on Friday night.

“Oh, man this is indescribable,” Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos said. “It’s such a great feeling.”

In a game unofficially known as Sacramento’s city championship, Vacaville overcame a 7-6 deficit at halftime with another outstanding second-half defensive effort to earn a school record 12th win this season. The 1985 Vacaville team, the only other team to reach the section finals, went 11-3. Vacaville will play Merced (also 12-1) in the section championship at the University of Pacific next Saturday at 1 p.m.

On Friday, the Bulldogs (12-1) held the Thundering Herd to 46 total yards in the second half, minus-10 yards on the ground. Thirty-nine of those 46 yards came on a questionable reception by 6-foot-5 Ryan Pearson with less than a minute remaining.

On the very next play, Kyle Caserza intercepted Kevin Frank’s pass with 41 seconds left to preserve the win and start the joyous on-field celebration. The interception was the only turnover all night for either team, and it punctuated yet another defensive masterpiece orchestrated by defensive coordinator Tom Zunino and his “Orange Crush” crew.

“We did an amazing job,” inside linebacker Matt Norman said. “It’s great: two years ago, Elk Grove did this to me in the playoffs (a 32-31 first-round playoff loss for Vacaville). It feels good to get them back. Now we’ve got to go to work Monday and finish the season off strong.”

Vacaville survived a flurry of strange plays midway through the third quarter to score its only second-half touchdown on a nine-play, 61-yard drive.

After jumping ahead 9-7 on Jeremy Hohn’s 25-yard field goal with 6:44 left in the third quarter, the madness had only just begun.

After a touchback was nullified because of an offside penalty on Vacaville, Hohn kicked off again, and Brannon Brooks returned it 92 yards for a touchdown. But that play was wiped out because of a block in the back against Elk Grove.

With the ball on Vacaville's 14-yard line, Bo Lukehart – who finished with two sacks and combined with Josh Kaddu, Zack Nash and Norman to make life miserable for Frank – sacked Frank for a safety. But another flag for defensive holding wiped out that play. Vacaville's defense held on for three more plays, aided in large part by a Nathan Mittelstadt sack, and got the ball back with 4:26 left in the third quarter.

Nine plays later, Peter Buck rumbled in for a 2-yard touchdown jaunt and a 16-7 Bulldog lead with 42 seconds remaining in the quarter. Dailey and Johnny Feaster had back-to-back runs of 14 and 15 yards, respectively, to set up Buck's score.

Feaster finished with nine carries for 46 yards. Quarterback Ricky Rodarte did what was asked, completing all four of his passes for 20 yards.

"We had to stop 1 (Frank) and 84 (Pearson). We did that. Matt Norman and Buck and Nash called one hell of a game," Zunino said. "Once the guys settled down, we held them."