



Elk Grove thwarts Vaca's playoff run

November 24, 2007 - A healthy Terrance Dailey might have made this a game for the ages.

It wasn't that bad with Vacaville High School's star running back on the sideline.

The Bulldog football team stayed right with Elk Grove for three-plus quarters without their top running back in the quarterfinals of the Sac-Joaquin Section Division I playoffs Friday.

But quarterback Kevin Frank and the Thundering Herd put the clamps on Vacaville in the second half, and pulled away in the fourth quarter for a 35-16 victory.

"Having Terrance would have helped, but we did ourselves in anyway," Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos said. "We put ourselves in tough situations ... first-and-15 ... and you can't do that against a good team.

"We had our chances, but we didn't take advantage."

The chances certainly would have been better with Dailey in the lineup. The fullback pulled his left hamstring in last week's playoff win over Jesuit, didn't practice all week and didn't even participate in pre-game warmups Friday night.

He did jog onto the field just before kickoff and went out for Vacaville's first series. He ran for two yards on two carries, and left the game for good after the Bulldogs' fourth play from scrimmage.

By then Vacaville already was behind for good, but the Bulldogs stayed close anyway. Johnny Feaster rushed for 104 yards in the first half and kicked a 35-yard field goal, and Robert Bensing scored on quarterback option runs of 56 and four yards when the Herd focused on Feaster.

But Vacaville never did take the lead, and Elk Grove turned in three big plays in the first half to stay in front. Frank completed passes of 56 and 34 yards to set up two 1-yard scoring runs by Marcus Rondez, and Rondez added a 65-yard touchdown run.

The Herd loaded up on Feaster after halftime, and held the Bulldogs to a mere 23 yards of total offense in the third and fourth quarters combined.

Elk Grove didn't do much after halftime, either, as both defenses dominated.

The two teams combined for six straight scoreless possessions before a botched snap on a Vacaville punt gave Elk Grove the ball in Vacaville territory. Three plays later, the Herd hit on another big play, as Frank pitched the ball to Brandon Soohoo, who threw back to Frank for a 25-yard completion to Vacaville's 10-yard line.

Four plays later, Frank returned the favor, pitching to Soohoo as he was being tackled. Soohoo went in untouched for a 4-yard touchdown run.

"They hit the big plays, and we didn't," Papadopoulos said. "That was the difference."

Frank added the final score, returning an interception 27 yards for a touchdown when Vacaville threw a desperation pass out of punt formation.

Frank finished with two interceptions, two pass completions, one pass reception and six carries for 31 yards. Rondez rushed for 139 yards, and Jake Rodriguez added 118.

For Vacaville, Feaster finished with 90 yards rushing on 12 carries. Bensing added 62 yards rushing, and Joey Scarrott had 56.

Vacaville finished the season at 10-2.

Elk Grove improved to 12-0, and will host Napa next week in the section semifinals. Napa beat Pleasant Grove 38-20 Friday night.

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