



Second-half surge lifts Vacaville to 43-27 win in playoff opener



Timothy Jackson and the Vacaville Bulldogs rushed for nearly 500 yards as they pulled away to a 43-27 victory over Monterey Trail Thursday at Tom Zunino Stadium.

Jackson rumbled for 247 yards on 24 carries as the fifth-seeded Bulldogs pulled away in the second half.

Vacaville (7-3) advances into the quarterfinals of the Sac Joaquin Section Division I football playoffs with the win, and will take on the winner of Saturday's contest between No. 4 Jesuit of Carmichael and 13th-seeded Modesto.

The Bulldog offensive line sealed the contest by opening up huge holes for Jackson, Dylan Warfield and Talon Abramowicz. Especially in the second half.

"The kids did a great job of hanging in there," Vacaville coach Mike Papadopoulos said. "I think we wore them down as we got toward the end of the game there. That really helped us out."

The Bulldogs chewed up 282 yards on 26 carries in the final two frames.

Vacaville controlled the entire fourth quarter, going on drives of six and 10 plays that both ended in touchdowns.

The Bulldogs jumped out to a 6-0 lead as Abramowicz rumbled in from 19 yards out on the game's third play from scrimmage.

Monterey Trail (6-5), the No. 12 seed, responded with a 45-yard pass from Zach Larrier to a wide open Brandon Hwa and a 7-6 lead.

After a Brandon Talton 26-yard field goal and a 1-yard scoring plunge by Jackson, the Bulldogs held a 16-7 margin with 4:41 left in the first half.

Monterey Trail took a 21-16 lead with a pair of scoring drives, but Jackson scored from 4 yards out with just under five minutes left in the second quarter to put the Bulldogs out front to stay.

Jackson galloped for a 69-yard run right up the middle to paydirt for his third score on the night.

After a Mustang touchdown trimmed the lead to 29-27 early in the fourth, Warfield went to work.

The sophomore pounded his way through the weary Monterey Trail defense for scoring runs of 12 and six yards. The final one came with 1:32 left on the clock to set the final score.

"He's really starting to come into his own . . . as the season's gone on," Papadopoulos said of Warfield. "In playing a much more physical game from the blocking and the faking really opened some things up. Then when it's his turn to carry, he did a tremendous job there as well."

Warfield finished with 129 yards on 14 carries, while Abramowicz had 126 yards on 11 totes.

Vacaville swarmed to the football all night, but the fourth quarter was spectacular for the Bulldog defense.

The Mustangs only managed 15 yards on nine plays in the frame as Vacaville asserted its dominance.

"They did a nice job inside," Papadopoulos said of his defensive unit. "The really tough part of that is making sure those other guys don't get baited into not doing their job on the outside.

"Each component of what we are asking of them – because we haven't seen this offense this year – in getting ready on a short week, they really did a nice job of making some adjustments when we went in at halftime."

The Bulldogs did have a pair of breakdowns in the secondary, as Monterey Trail connected on a 45-yard pass in the first quarter and then just missed another wide open scoring throw on the same play one drive later.

"It was an assignment issue," said Papadopoulos. "They misread an alignment, and just weren't covering the right person. . . . But it gives us an opportunity to learn a little bit going into next week."

Papadopoulos added that some halftime adjustments fixed the problem.

"We were in good shape, but they are a great program as well," Papadopoulos said of his locker room speech. "We were able to make the adjustments that we needed to and change a couple of assignments. The kids are great students of the game. They watch film, they are invested into what we are teaching them, and it makes it easy when we need to make halftime adjustments."