



Vacaville Bulldogs fall to 1-1 after tough loss to Oak Ridge

It's very difficult to overcome even one or two turnovers in football.

Five turnovers is almost impossible.

The Vacaville Bulldogs shot themselves in the foot all night long Friday in El Dorado Hills in a matchup with a familiar Oak Ridge team, led by head coach and former Bulldog Eric Cavaliere.

Vacaville (1-1) handed Oak Ridge (2-0) five freebies, three in the second half, in route to a 41-15 loss. The Bulldogs lost three fumbles and threw two interceptions on the night.

"You just can't turn the ball over like that against a team as good as Oak Ridge," head coach Mike Papadopoulos said post-game. "They're a super football team and they are going to win a lot of games this year."

After Vacaville punted on its first possession of the game, Oak Ridge powered its way down the field and scored on a quarterback keeper as Marco Baldacchino burned the Bulldogs on a readoption touchdown run from 22 yards out.

Vacaville's offense again sputtered in its second possession of the game and were forced to punt. The Bulldogs hit a nice punt down inside the five yard line and the defense cashed in for a two-point safety as Cassius Reynolds flew in on a blitz and sacked Baldacchino in the end zone.

The defense continued to play well in the early going as defensive lineman Jake Levengood stepped in front of an attempted Oak Ridge screen pass and intercepted it on the first play of the second quarter. On the very next play, Vacaville quarterback Troy Claunch found receiver Jon Donaldson behind the defense for a 29 yard touchdown on a play action pass play to give Vacaville a 9-7 lead.

But the Trojans responded with two touchdown drives, one to end the first half and one midway through the third quarter. Baldacchino hit Austin Easterman for a 20 yard touchdown just before halftime and then he added another touchdown run on a 12 yard read option play after the Bulldogs had botched a handoff and fumbled the ball away. Those two scores put Oak Ridge up 20-9.

The Bulldogs closed it to 20-15 after junior quarterback Cameron Mitchell came in and hit Donaldson in the back corner of the end zone on a post pattern.

From there, it was all Trojans as they hung 21 unanswered points on the board to close out the game. A touchdown run and pass from Baldacchino and a 29 yard touchdown run from Rhys Kennedy sealed the deal for Oak Ridge. Two more Vacaville turnovers aided the effort.

"This was like a playoff game for us early on in the season," Papadopoulos said. "It gives us a chance to see where we're at and make the necessary adjustments. I thought our defense gave us a few good chances in the beginning and we just didn't capitalize. Even at the end of the third quarter we had a chance to be right in the middle of the game."

Daniel Wright led the ground attack for Vacaville with 119 yards on 20 touches. Timothy Jackson also carried it 15 times for 62 yards. Austin Green pitched in 41 yards on 10 carries.

Donaldson led the receiving category with 41 yards and two touchdowns, while Jackson added 20 yards on two catches.

Jacob Abramowicz had eight tackles, two for loss, for a defense that played well for a good portion of the game. Brandon Mingus had 7.5 tackles and Toven Steele had 6.5 tackles

The Bulldogs welcome Yuba City to town next week.