



‘Dogs keep leg up in the playoffs

November 25, 2006 - Mike Posey was throwing up a couple times in the first half. He didn't know what was wrong.

The Bulldogs weren't feeling so well, either.

But after Posey took a few Tums at halftime, he and Vacaville High School started opening big holes for the running backs, eliminating turnovers and playing staunch run defense in a 33-22 football victory against Sheldon of Sacramento Friday night at Tom Zunino Stadium.

Down two scores, Sheldon elected to punt with 4:15 left in the game. The Bulldogs wouldn't let the Huskies touch the ball again. When Johnny Feaster rushed for four yards on a third-and-1 play, Vacaville ran out the last 1:33 and as the clock wound down, Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos let out a ferocious yelp to his charges.

"We're going to the final four, boys!" Papadopoulos said, while hugging Tom Zunino, his father-in-law and defensive coordinator, and linebacker Matt Norman. "We're going to the final four."

Terrance Dailey helped Vacaville (11-1) advance to the Sac-Joaquin Section Division I semifinals against Elk Grove (11-1) by rushing for 142 yards on 21 carries. Dailey, a junior, now has 1,960 yards this season, tying Ron Minamide's record for rushing yards in a season set in 1959.

"I came in here just wanting to win," Dailey said. "If I got close that's great, but we came here to win."

The Bulldogs struggled mightily in the first half, with three turnovers resulting in 14 points for Sheldon. Vacaville still led 16-14 at the break, thanks in large part to outrushing the Huskies 197 yards to 21.

Sheldon had minus-3 rushing yards in the second half while Dailey, Bobby Ortiz, and Peter Buck started finding wider holes. Jeremy Hohn also played a big role, giving Vacaville extra cushion with field goals of 45 and 36 yards. Josh Kaddu and Kyle Caserza had second-half interceptions.

Ortiz rushed for 98 yards and three touchdowns, while Buck gained 66 of his 69 yards in the second half. Feaster had 56 rushing yards, including a 32-yard rushing score with 9:01 remaining in the second quarter for a 16-7 Vacaville advantage.

Posey, the left tackle, helped Vacaville win the battle on the line.

“We fought as hard as we could,” Posey said. “Up front, they were real strong and quick. In the second half, we cleaned up our mistakes and the holes picked up.”

Vacaville scored on its second drive of the night when Ortiz, aided by a pivotal Dailey block, rumbled 43 yards into the end zone with 3:23 left in the first quarter for a 7-0 lead.

But that’s when the trouble started.

After Sheldon’s offense went three-downs-and-out, Vacaville got the ball back only to lose it two plays into its third drive. Thomas Downs ripped the ball out of Buck’s hands and ran untouched 43 yards for a touchdown, shocking the Bulldogs with 1:04 left in the opening quarter.

After a Hohn field goal and Feaster touchdown for a 16-7 lead, Ortiz coughed up the ball with 3:31 left in the first half. Sheldon’s Ryan Williams made the Bulldogs pay with a 7-yard touchdown catch from Cam Morris.

Ricky Rodarte threw an interception – Vacaville’s third turnover of the half – with 42 seconds left in the second quarter, but the Huskies (9-3) couldn’t capitalize as Williams missed a 47-yard field goal with one second left.

Vacaville allowed only one big play the rest of the way while Ortiz added rushing touchdowns of one and four yards. Hohn provided the cushion with his career-best 45-yard field goal with 7:12 remaining for what would be the game’s final points.

“I’m really happy for the kids,” Papadopoulos said. “The defense played another great game.”

Now, the Bulldogs must play at Elk Grove after four straight home games.

“Elk Grove is probably the toughest competition we’ll see in the section,” Norman said. “It’ll be two teams that like to punch each other in the mouth.”