



Vaca downs St. Mary's in football playoffs

By Mike Corpus | Daily Republic | November 18, 2011

VACAVILLE — The muddy conditions at Tom Zunino Stadium Friday night only slowed the Vacaville High football team a little.

Virtually nothing could actually stop the determined Bulldogs (11-1) as they topped St. Mary's of Stockton 27-19 in the second round of the Sac-Joaquin Section Division II playoffs.

Vacaville still racked up 375 yards, a modest total by the No. 4 Bulldogs' lofty standards, but plenty to keep the No. 5 Rams (9-3) guessing, and to make key plays when needed.

The win puts Vacaville in the semifinals at No. 1 Buhach Colony of Atwater next Friday night.

Curtis Goins rushed for 120 yards on 25 carries for the Bulldogs and Melvin Mason trudged through the mud for 160 yards on 23 carries.

Terrance Trueblood added 33 yards on the ground, but it was his lone, fourth-quarter catch that was the play of the game.

On fourth-and-four from the St. Mary's 29 with about 2 minutes left, Goins took a handoff from quarterback Coleman Christensen, broke right and let fly a 22-yard pass to Trueblood, who snared it under pressure just inches inside the line, leaving two telltale toe streaks in the mud as evidence.

Two plays later, Mason dove into the end zone for a 26-13 lead with 1 minute, 38 seconds to play. Reed White's conversion kick upped the score to 27-13.

"We'll have to come up with a name for it," said Bulldogs coach Mike Papadopoulos of the catch. "It's definitely one of the bigger plays in the history of our program."

That series proved crucial as the Rams then drove 74 yards in 1:16 for a Bowe Merin touchdown pass to Matt Somers to get within 27-19.

Vacaville recovered the onside kick attempt and Christensen took a knee to run out the final seconds.

An ecstatic Trueblood called the win, "Humongous."

He was nearly at a loss for words describing the catch.

"I just saw the sideline and I knew I had to make it," he said. "We're making history, we're living the dream."

History indeed. The last time Vacaville won its first two playoff games was in 2006 when it won a section championship. This year's seniors were in sixth grade.

The win puts the Bulldogs into the section semifinals for the fourth time (1934, 1985, and 2006). All three previous times, they reached the title game.

Early Friday it looked like it would be a defensive slog as the Rams took a 7-0 lead with 40 seconds to go in the first quarter.

The Bulldogs responded halfway through the second with a 23-yard TD pass from Christensen to T.J. Fischer to get within 7-6 after a missed extra-point kick.

Two minutes later, St. Mary's struck on a 54-yard scoring pass from Merin to Kaodi Dike.

Vacaville tied it at 13-13 on a 1-yard scoring run by Goins with 32 second left in the half, and took the lead for good at 20-13 on Mason's 55-yard TD dash to open the third quarter.