



Bulldogs rout Wildcats 49-7 for MEL title



Football fans at all levels have heard the adage that “its not how you start but how you finish”.

But for Friday night’s MEL champion deciding Black and Blue Bowl, Vacaville’s overpowering start was simply too much for Will C. Wood amid Friday night’s action at Tom Zunino Stadium.

In a season finale deemed by many in town as one of the biggest in the cross-town rivalry’s history, Friday night’s 28th annual meeting was all black and little blue with the Bulldogs cruising to the 49-7 win.

Vacaville senior speedster Timothy Jackson has seemingly scored a touchdown every which way on the gridiron this season. Jackson, who had yet to savor the taste of a MEL championship, was a man with a mission on Senior Night as he accounted for three of the Bulldogs’ seven rushing touchdowns and added 146 rushing yards on 14 carries.

The Bulldogs received the ball to begin the evening and needed just five plays and two minutes to punch it in.

After picking up a first down on his second run of the night, fellow senior Tre’vonne Hunt took the ball 37 yards along the Vaca High sideline before being stopped on the five by Wood’s Isaac Pewitt. The five-yard run by Jackson was followed up with a rare two-point conversion by Vaca High’s Clayton Watterson and that was ultimately the beginning of the end for Wood.

"We wanted the ball first so we could come down and score and show them what we're about early on," said Jackson, as his teammates celebrated in the background.

And that display was made abundantly clear throughout the opening half as Vacaville continued to pour it on courtesy of its ground game.

Following a three-and-out by the Wildcats, the Bulldogs offense worked their way down the field but were eventually faced with a 4th and 1. But on the ensuing play, the Wood defense was caught off guard as Jackson picked up the first down and some on a 28-yard run.

The Vacaville offense, which finished with 419 yards on the evening, scored in just over three minutes as Jackson punched it in from three yards out to give the Bulldogs a quick 14-0 advantage.

Following another sluggish drive by the Wood offense, Vaca High took over and managed to score a pair of rushing touchdowns in just eight minutes of play. The Bulldogs' Talon Abramowicz began the second quarter with a 16-yard run to his left before Jackson added his third and final score with 7:26 left in the first half to give his team a commanding 28-0 lead.

For Will C. Wood head coach Carlos Meraz, the flat start on the biggest of stages thwarted his team's opportunity to walk off the field with their first MEL title and their fifth consecutive victory.

"[Vacaville] came out with a little more energy than we did and we didn't match them in the beginning," Meraz said. "And once they jumped ahead that's where the trouble began. The biggest problem was that we got away from what we do. We let the atmosphere get the best of us and we didn't play the way we've been playing the last couple weeks."

Wood managed to score on the ensuing possession as senior running back Daniel McFadden scored his 11th touchdown of the season from two yards out. But with 2:11 left on the scoreboard, Vacaville senior quarterback Cameron Mitchell seamlessly orchestrated an 80-yard drive that ended on a 50-yard passing touchdown to junior Mason Price with just three seconds left on the clock.

But while the Vacaville offense came up big throughout the game and on the box score, Jackson credited his defense for fueling the blowout victory.

"Our defense came up big for us," he said. "They were working hard all week, watching film, going through plays and grinding out, and it showed tonight. The defense definitely turned the tide in stopping a run game that has been deadly and it allowed us to get our run game going."

Vacaville held the Wood run game to a season-low 113 yards, with McFadden tallying 31 yards, Derriyon Jack adding 27 yards, and Asa Wondeh rushing for 24 yards. Although Vaca High's success on the ground was headlined by Jackson, Hunt added 63 yards, Abramowicz tallied 54 yards and Dylan Warfield finished with 45 yards.

The win for the Bulldogs moved their Black and Blue Bowl record to 24-4, and was only the fourth game cross-town contest in which the Wildcats were held to seven points or less.

Both teams are slated for next week's Sac-Joaquin Section playoffs and await Saturday's playoff pairings that are scheduled to be announced at 4 p.m.