



Bulldogs rally past Wildcats in thriller

By Tim Roe | Vacaville Reporter | November 15, 2008

Inches from heartbreak ... or elation.

Take your pick, but whether you wore Black or Blue ... or neither ... Friday night, this was an instant classic.

Vacaville High School won its 11th straight Black and Blue Bowl, but this was nothing like the others. The Bulldogs won 28-27 when Markell Williams ran in a two-point conversion with 42.5 seconds left after Jimmy Hines scored from three yards out.

"This just shows that we can overcome ... it's never over," said Williams, who ran untouched through the right side of the Vacaville line. "I just thought, 'Can you believe this?' "

Wood nearly came back and stunned the packed house at Tom Zunino Stadium even after Williams' conversion. The Wildcats drove 30 yards in two plays, but Jesus Oropeza's 56-yard field goal attempt with six seconds left hit the crossbar and bounced straight backward.

The kick would have broken the Wildcats' record for longest field goal by 11 yards.

"With the wind, we knew he could make it easily. He just hit it a little too low ... a line drive," said Wood head coach Mike Boles, who added that isn't resigning yet.

If this had been Boles' last game, it arguably would have been the Wildcats' best in his tenure.

Wood gained 128 yards in the first quarter alone, led 12-0 after 12 minutes and gave the Bulldogs fits all night.

Still, the Wildcats (3-7 overall, 1-4 in Monticello Empire League play) needed four turnovers from Vacaville in the second half to finally retake the lead. Donavan Balsley's

12-yard run and Oropeza's kick with 2:29 left gave Wood a 27-20 lead after Troy Burton had returned a Vacaville fumble 30 yards.

But the Bulldogs rallied, with Ross Peacock engineering an 80-yard drive that took just 1:47. Peacock completed five passes in the march after completing just two in the first 45 minutes.

Hines finished the march with his third scoring run of the night. He rushed for 95 yards on 20 carries, topping the 1,000-yard mark for the season. Williams added 87 yards and a touchdown.

Wood's Andrade Shorty finished with a game-high 130 yards on 25 attempts. Balsley added 74 yards on just seven attempts, including two scores.

Travis Berry added a 1-yard scoring run for Wood, and Justin Gomez threw a 15-yard scoring pass to David Gaskins.

"I thought we had there for a second," Boles added. "I'm just proud of my guys. I can't say enough. We just kept fighting a fighting."

Vacaville improved to 7-3 overall and 4-1 in MEL games. The Bulldogs open the Sac-Joaquin Section playoffs at Nevada Union next week.

"It's hard to beat anybody when you turn the ball over four times, but we didn't panic," Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos said. "This was big for us. Hopefully it shows us that we can come back from adversity. Hopefully we can take that into the playoffs and be tougher because of it."