



Vacaville downs Del Oro to advance to section semis

No matter how many times Del Oro High challenged Vacaville, the Bulldogs fended them off Friday night in a 35-28 win at Golden Eagle Stadium.

The victory moved No. 5 Vacaville (10-2) to their first Sac-Joaquin Section Division II semifinal game since 2011, the same year the school captured a section title.

Vacaville moves on to play Grant, which beat Downey of Modesto 63-21 in its section quarterfinal game, Friday.

The No. 4 Golden Eagles (6-6) fought to their last down, with the Bulldogs defense mounting a goal-line stand when Del Oro pushed inside the 5-yard line on its final possession. On 3rd-and-goal from the 1, Vacaville drove the Golden Eagles' Christian Guerrero back 3 yards. On fourth down, Del Oro quarterback Logan Hurst tried a keeper, but also met a swarm of Bulldogs defenders.

"They're very resilient," said Vacaville head coach Mike Papadopoulos after Friday's contest. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else but here tonight."

Although the final drive showed Del Oro's resolve, it wasn't the only time the Golden Eagles made the game complicated for the Bulldogs.

Vacaville saw a 21-14 lead turn into a 28-21 deficit on consecutive possessions in the second half.

First, Del Oro chewed nearly 7 minutes from the clock on a drive that moved forward on multiple chain measurements. One in particular drew the ire of the Bulldogs sideline, which had multiple coaches and players crying the chains had already been reset for its offense to take the field when the measurement was conducted.

"Football is a matter of inches," Papadopoulos said. "I told our kids not to live and die on that (measurement)."

That drive concluded with Mason Hurst's diving 14-yard touchdown catch to tie the game at 21. After Del Oro recovered its own kickoff and scored three plays later on a keeper by Logan Hurst, the Golden Eagles led 28-21.

But the Bulldogs showed the resolve of which their coach spoke. A 13-play, 67-yard drive ended in a score when Vacaville's Mykal Walker slipped inside the left pylon for a 2-yard TD to even the score at 28 with 7:45 remaining.

After a four-and-out possession for the Golden Eagles, Vacaville took a lead it never surrendered on its next drive. Kane Cunningham scored touchdowns on his first and last carries of the game, the last giving his team a 35-28 edge when he jettied through the Del Oro secondary for a 43-yard score.

Cunningham scored the Bulldogs' first touchdown, too, capping the game-opening drive with a twisting, turning 24-yard TD rush. While Cunningham amassed 126 yards, it was his teammate Damonte Moore who led all rushers with 151 yards. Moore added a touchdown, which came on a 64-yard, 4th-and-1 carry to take a 21-14 lead before the half.

Cassius Reynolds also had a 40-yard touchdown run for Vacaville.

Del Oro missed a 39-yard field goal in the closing seconds of the first half as the ball bounced off the crossbar and back into the end zone.