



## Napa executes play call late as Spinelli, defense stop Vacaville

The play call from the Napa High School sideline on third down and 4 from the Vacaville 5-yard line late in the fourth quarter Friday night, with the game on the line and so much at stake, was "Pistol 2-bunch right-80 vista,-Z shallow."

Coach Troy Mott sometimes calls it in two-point conversion situations. It's a play that the Indians work on a lot in practice.

"We're very comfortable with it," said Mott.

Quarterback Austin Spinelli, wide receiver Alex Perez de Leon and the rest of the offensive unit executed the play beautifully. Rolling out to his right, Spinelli connected with Perez de Leon on a 5-yard touchdown pass in the south end zone with just 2:09 to go and Napa held off Vacaville, 28-21, in a key Monticello Empire League game at Memorial Stadium.

"Once he broke, he was pretty much wide open," said Spinelli. "I think I put it right where it needed to be. He caught it. It was a touchdown."

Spinelli also had three touchdown runs as Napa (5-3, 3-0 MEL) won its third game in a row while taking over sole possession of first place with just two games to go in the regular season. Spinelli ran for 123 yards and passed for 54 yards.

"The defense and the O-line played amazing tonight," said Spinelli. "Hats off to them. It helps to have our line win the line of scrimmage and just open up holes. It just really makes my job a lot easier."

Friday's game between Vacaville (5-3, 2-1 MEL) and Napa was featured as a Great American Rivalry Series game. This was the 10th weekend of games for the Rivalry Series. This year, the game is presented by the U.S. Marine Corps. The Rivalry Series features games from California to Washington and from Florida to Maine.

"We're playing our best football when it counts – in league," said Spinelli. "Every time they scored, we knew we just had to answer right back. That's just who our team is. We didn't put our heads down tonight. We just kept battling."

Napa answered Vacaville's game-tying touchdown, a six-yard run by Timothy Jackson with 5:13 to go, with an 80-yard scoring drive in seven plays. The key plays were Spinelli's 12-yard pass to Kale Olmstead and Spinelli's 31-yard run on a keeper to the Vacaville 11-yard line.

"(Spinelli) is a very electric player," said Vacaville coach Mike Papadopoulos. "We had a hard time slowing him down all night. He had a great run at the end to shut the door on us.

"He does a lot of great things for them. You can tell that he's very much the center of what they're trying to do. I give (Napa) credit all the way around. They play great assignment football all the way around."

Napa is clearly a different football team than it was during the five-game nonleague season. The Indians can clinch at least a tie for the title, their third straight, with a win on Oct. 28 at Armijo.

"We've got a lot of work to do," said Mott. "We'll focus on next week's game like we always do and get ready. We're going to enjoy this one – at least for tonight and then we'll get back to work Sunday morning to get ready to travel to Armijo."

The Napa rush defense held Vacaville to just 94 yards on the ground.

Napa owned the first half, limiting Vacaville to just 20 rush yards and two first downs while forcing three punts.

"Our kids continue to trust our process and they continue to work very hard and prepare very hard," explained Mott. "It truly is about trusting the coaches and trusting their teammates and continuing to work. They've done that and will continue to do that.

"I tip my hat to the kids. They gutted it out. They were resilient. They didn't allow any negativity. We just kept playing, kept going. And good things were able to happen for us."

Vacaville had one last chance. Taking over on its 23-yard line, the Bulldogs were able to move the ball close to midfield. But on a fourth and 13 from their 37-yard line, Napa's Leo Rodriguez recovered a fumble after a completed pass with 46.8 seconds to go.

Napa then ran out the clock.

"They know us very well and we know them very well," Mott said of Vacaville. "It's a constant chess game with those guys. They're really good coaches and they're moving pieces and we're trying to react. And then we're moving pieces and they're trying to react. Trying to play the chess game with those guys is kind of unlike any other."

Vacaville took just three plays to score, as Troy Claunch, who is headed to Oregon State on a baseball scholarship next year, hit Beau Lopez on an 84-yard touchdown pass.

Napa responded by taking a 14-7 lead at halftime after a pair of Spinelli TD runs.

Spinelli's 9-yard run capped a 54-yard, 11-play drive.

Sean Madigan's long punt return gave Napa the ball at the Bulldogs' 24. Spinelli scored on a 3-yard run on fourth and 1.

The Indians got an interception from Alex Fragoza early in the second half.

Napa went up 21-7 in the third quarter as Spinelli scored on a seven-yard run to cap a five-play, 45-yard drive.

"(Napa) came up with a really great scheme and the kids from Napa executed it really, really well," said Papadopoulos. "It took us a little while to figure it out and make some adjustments on our end. The defense gave us a chance toward the end with the fumble. I was really proud of the way they came out with a lot of resolve and gave us a chance to do something."

Vacaville got back in the game as Claunch threw a 51-yard TD pass.

Madigan intercepted a pass at the Napa 9-yard line to stop a Vacaville drive.

But Napa turned it over on a fumble just two plays later. Jackson scored the tying touchdown.

Daniel Wright, a returning All-MEL halfback who has 529 yards rushing and 10 TDs in five games, did not play for Vacaville due to an injury.

"We'll see what happens in the future and see if we can hopefully get him going," said Papadopoulos.

Dawson Trent ran for 71 yards and Madigan caught two passes for 37 yards.

Troy Claunch threw for 163 yards.

"When we catch the ball and we catch it vertically, it really helps our running game quite a bit," said Papadopoulos.