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Explosive offenses highlight home stretch for football

By Jon Kingdon



Robbie Rowell Photos Gint Federas

With the high school football season over half way completed, Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte are all well on their way to qualifying for the post-season playoffs. With each team displaying explosive offenses, averaging respectively, 45, 38 and 31 points a game, the home stretch of the 2017 season should provide some very intriguing matchups each week.

In his second season as head coach, Floyd Burnsed has led Acalanes to a major turnaround from last season's 4 and 7 team. That team scored a total of 209 points. So far after six games this season, the undefeated Dons have scored 274 points, averaging over 45 points a game. The team's defense has proven to be just as effective. After giving up 29 points a game last season, the defense this season is giving up an average of only 12 points a game. These numbers are certainly going to be challenged as Acalanes heads into the heart of their schedule.

Says Burnsed: "It took time for the team to learn the system on both sides of the ball. Everything, including the terminology, was new to them. We are still learning through this season."

Burnsed was concerned about his lack of depth coming into this season but the Dons have stayed "fairly healthy and the backups have been stepping in and getting good experience though it will still take them time to develop."

Running a passing offense, quarterback Robbie Rowell has been dominating. He has thrown for 25 touchdowns and only one interception. "He really understands where to go with the ball," says Burnsed. Sophomore Nick

Kresnak, the team's backup quarterback, has gotten valuable experience as Rowell has rarely had to play in the fourth quarter.

The team's offensive line, though not big, has utilized a lot of different blocking schemes to compensate for their lack of girth. Complementing Rowell are running backs Jake Delaney, a sophomore, and junior Keziah Smith, both of whom Burnsed describes as "fast and elusive."

Assistant Coach David Ortega's defense has been dominating at times. Inside linebacker Nick Henderson and outside linebacker Ryan Nall have been the mainstays for the defense. It was Henderson that made the final tackle at the goal line to preserve the Dons' win over Suncoast High School in Orlando, Fla., a game which Burnsed saw as "building confidence in ourselves to the point where we now expect to win every time we go out to play a game."

Campolindo Head Coach Kevin Macy was taking a big gamble coming into the 2017 season. He announced that his starting quarterback was going to be his best athlete, John Torchio, a wide receiver/free safety the prior two seasons. After six games, it appears that the gamble has paid off. Campolindo, with a 4 and 2 record, has been averaging over 38 points per game. Macy feels there is still room for improvement: "John has been more of an athlete than a classic quarterback, but he has been improving each week."

Vince Mossotti has been Torchio's favorite target having come a long way from the start of the season. Macy appreciates how far the two have come: "The two of them are connecting more. It was not natural initially but it has been a work in process." Lucas Allen is another receiver who has shown constant improvement.

The rushing attack has been relying primarily on Torchio's designed runs and his ability to ad lib when the receivers are not open.

Macy was particularly concerned with his young defense and with good reason as they have given up an average of 28 points per game but anticipates much improved play from this unit. "Last week was the first time that we had three players that we were relying on coming into the season on the field at the same time," he said.

Defensive end, Justin Ehrenberger, who has been plagued all season with a pulled hamstring, is finally healthy. The other defensive end, Jake Walgen, is also healthy for the first time after suffering a broken collarbone. The team's top cornerback, Ryan Mc Nally, though still a bit rusty, coming back from a torn medial collateral ligament suffered in the offseason playing baseball, is providing a lot of stability in the team's secondary.

Miramonte High School has been able to show great balance between their offense and defense. Head Coach Jack Schram prior to the season said that he "looked for much improvement on defense." He has not been disappointed: the 5-1 Matadors have held their opponents to seven points or fewer, with one shutout in their five victories.

Schram has been most pleased with all of his linebackers. As expected, middle linebacker Sam Walker has been the leader on the defense. Outside linebackers Ben Schmidt and Peter Stehr have been equally effective.

Jake Hazard has proven to be a shut down cornerback.

Behind quarterback Xavier Clark, the offense has proven to be a smooth running machine. Schram is very pleased in Clark's development this season. "Xavier is a solid quarterback," he said. "He is a great leader and he really understands the game."

The running attack has relied on two backs: the aforementioned Peter Stehr, who Schram describes as "a downhill, power runner" and Henry Vacakis, the change of pace back who has proven to be an effective, cutback openfield runner.



John Torchio



Sam Walker

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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