

Published November 21st, 2012

Lamorinda Football Season Ends in NCS Playoffs

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Andrew Zolintakis Photo Karen Drinkwater

after and still trailed 7-6.

The Dragons took the lead momentarily in the fourth quarter, but Mitchell scored once more to give the Dons a 13-9 lead. Clinging to the four point lead, Acalanes forced the Dragons into a fourth and 21 on the Acalanes 36-yard line late in the game. However, Dominic Mirogolio was able to convert with Kevin King, who caught the pass on the one-yard line and stretched in for the 16-13 win.

"We played really well," said Acalanes coach Mike Ivankovich. "We didn't lose that game. [O'Dowd] made the play. Their two best guys were able to convert."

Despite losing in the first round, there were numerous positives moving forward for the Dons. With 11 starters coming back, and roster openings being filled by members of the junior varsity team that went 9-1, Acalanes will once again be in the mix for a league title next season.

"We lost a total of four games by a total of fourteen points," said Ivankovich. "There isn't much space between where we are now and where we want to play for a league championship."

After dismantling Terra Linda, No. 4 Campolindo hosted Analy. The momentum was short-lived as the Tigers raced out to a quick 14-0 lead in the first quarter.

Andrew Zolintakis, filling in for senior quarterback Brett Stephens, got a touchdown for the Cougars on a seven-yard pass to Phillip Rei, but the Tigers responded with a touchdown of their own.

Zolintakis combined with Rei once more before the end of the first half to bring the Cougars within seven at half time, 21-14.

After an Analy field goal, Zolintakis connected with Matt Yoklavich on a 40-yard score to bring the Cougars within three points, 21-24. The teams then traded touchdowns.

Later, a 65-yard touchdown drive in 58 seconds, orchestrated by Zolintakis, gave the Cougars hope. A blocked point-after attempt forced the Cougars to score a touchdown to win the game, instead of being only down a field goal.

On cue, the Campolindo defense forced Analy to go three and out and give Zolintakis one last drive to give the Cougars a win. But Analy's defense held on to the lead to earn the 38-34 win.

Despite the loss, in Coach Kevin Macy's eyes, this was a good year for his squad. "It was an eerie year," said Macy. "No one came to the games. Everyone thought this year was going to be ugly. Everyone anticipated that nothing right would happen."

After winning the Division III NCS Championship last year, the Cougars returned few starters, including Stephens. However, after Stephens was lost to an injury, the team faced adversity. Zolintakis stepped up big and, combined with a young receiving corps, kept the Cougars in the playoffs.

"You look at everything we have done this year," said Macy, "it has been an incredible performance by the team. Every game we won was a surprise."

After a 35-7 win over No. 10 Tennyson, No. 7 Miramonte traveled to face No. 2 Marin Catholic. After an 82-yard touchdown from quarterback Drew Anderson to Zati Williams, everything went south for the Mats. After a blocked point-after attempt, the Wildcats scored 59 unanswered points to blow out Miramonte 59-6.

The first week of November marks not only the start of the playoffs for high school football, but the beginning of poor weather and Lamorinda teams fought both opponents and conditions in the first two rounds of NCS playoffs.

On Nov. 9, while cross-town rival Campolindo defeated Terra Linda 38-19 in Moraga, the No. 8 Acalanes Dons battled No. 9 Bishop O'Dowd. In frigid conditions, neither team was able to get anything going on offense.

Bishop O'Dowd was set to take the lead in the first quarter but their fake field goal attempt was stuffed by Acalanes.

Acalanes mustered offense behind its two solid running backs. Deshawn Johnson followed a 26-yard run with a 16-yard run. After a 22-yard scramble by Don's quarterback Robbie Stern, Peter Mitchell was able to break loose and score on a 27-yard run. Behind its strong defense, Acalanes took its 7-0 lead into halftime.

However, as the game wore on, Bishop O'Dowd was able to make big plays on offense. Facing fourth and ten, the Dragons converted and scored with 1:22 left in the third quarter. However, O'Dowd was unable to convert the point

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