

Dons stumble in opener

September 15, 2008 by [Dan Shiells - PRESIDIO SPORTS CORRESPONDENT](#)



Sam McCowan scored four touchdowns in the first quarter Friday night at Peabody Stadium.

The way the game was going, and the way the Oxnard High offense was clicking, it did not seem improbable that he might finish with some silly-sick numbers. As it was, McCowan touched the ball on offense only once in each of the next two quarters, finishing with 85 yards on eight carries and two catches for 27 yards.

But the rest of the Oxnard offense was far from done. Jamel Smith made two electric touchdown catches and quarterback Dasmien Stewart piled up 263 yards in total offense as the Yellowjackets stung SantaBarbara for a 48-21 non-league football win that was not as close as the final score.

“Actually, I like to see everyone score,” said McCowan, who also put in a full night in the secondary keeping tabs on Santa Barbara’s prolific passing attack. “We have seven, three-year seniors on this team so we have a lot of leadership.”

It was the season opener for both teams and reversed the outcome of last year’s game at Oxnard. Both teams went on to have good seasons and returned most of their key offensive players, so this figured to be a shootout. Unfortunately for the Dons, they kept shooting themselves in the foot, losing four fumbles in the first half.

“We made a lot of mistakes and you can’t do that against a team with as good an offense as Oxnard,” said Santa Barbara coach Will Gonzales. “I never thought I’d say this but they are even better than last year. They have a lot of seniors who just make plays.”

McCowan is certainly exhibit No. 1. He darted for a 16-yard score on Oxnard’s second play of the game after Santa Barbara fumbled the opening kickoff. Martin Gonzalez kicked the first of his six PATs. The Dons tied the game on a 4-yard pass from John Uribe to Roberto Nelson and a PAT by Chase Chandler. But McCowan turned on the jets for touchdown runs of 13 and 23 yards and finished the quarter with a 15-yard touchdown catch-and-run after a pass from Stewart. Oxnard led 27-7 with 1:02 left in the first quarter.

“Sam is an incredible player,” said Oxnard coach Mark Beckham. “He’s got great speed, great quickness and great vision. Any time he touches the ball, he’s a threat to go all the way.”

Santa Barbara’s answer to McCowan and company is a no-huddle offense and a never-say-die passing attack that is perfectly willing to throw the old down-and-distance conventions in the trash. The Dons went for it on fourth down seven times in the first half, usually on fourth-and-long in their own territory. Most of the time, they converted, going 7-for-10 for the game. Unfortunately, for the Dons, they conversions were too often followed by players losing the ball stretching for extra yards.

Despite the miscues, Santa Barbara quarterback John Uribe kept flinging and receiver Bryson Lloyd kept clinging to the ball. Lloyd caught 17 passes for 164 yards and a touchdown while Uribe finished 28-for-46 for 226 yards with a touchdown pass to Roberto Nelson.

“We have some things we can build on offensively,” said Gonzales.

Oxnard’s offense, meanwhile, looked to be a bit more than a work in progress. Stewart hit a leaping Smith for an 11-yard score in the third quarter and Smith made several start-and-stop moves to turn a simple slip-screen into a 58-yard touchdown pass early in the fourth quarter. Stewart finished 8-of-13 for 197 yards passing also kept the chains moving by running for 65 yards.

“Dasmien did a real good job of managing the game,” said Beckham. “He’s got a great arm and Jamel made a couple of very nice catches.”

Brian Jones added the final Oxnard score on a 2-yard run as reserves played most of the final two quarters.

Santa Barbara got two fourth-quarter scores on passes by the versatile Nelson, who has signed to play basketball at Oregon State. Nelson connected with Lloyd for a 2-yard score and hit Freddie Maldonado in stride for a 57-yard score. He finished 4-of-9 for 103 yards passing and nearly had a third score in the final seconds on a scrambling throw that barely eluded Lloyd at the goal line.

Smith finished with five catches for 165 yards while reserve running back Jade Campbell rushed 11 times for 58 yards for Oxnard. Kyle Leonard ran for 69 yards to lead the Dons.

OXNARD 48, SANTA BARBARA 21

Oxnard 27 7 14 0 — 48
Santa Barbara 7 0 0 14 — 21

First quarter

Oxnard — McCowan 16 run (Gonzalez kick) 11:15.
SBHS — Nelson 4 pass from Uribe (Changler kick) 8:58.
Oxnard — McCowan 13 run (kick failed) 7:21.
Oxnard — McCowan 23 run (Gonzalez kick) 3:32.
Oxnard — McCowan 15 pass from Stewart (Gonzalez kick) 1:02.

Second quarter

Oxnard — Smith 11 pass from Stewart (Gonzalez kick) 1:03.

Third quarter

Oxnard — Smith 58 pass from Stewart (Gonzalez kick) 9:25.
Oxnard — Jones 2 run (Gonzalez kick) 3:34.

Fourth quarter

SBHS — Lloyd 2 pass from Nelson (Chandler kick) 14:05.
SBHS — Maldonado 57 pass from Nelson (Chandler kick) 1:14.

Totals Ox SB

First downs.....18 13
Rushes-yards.....40-245 30-122
Passing yards.....197 329
Comp-Att-Int.....8-13-0 32-55-1
Sacks-yards lost.....1-7 1-2
Punts-avg.....3-36 3-29.3
Fumbles-lost.....5-2 6-4
Penalties-yards.....5-25 5-37

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Oxnard: Fernandez 6-26, McCowan 8-85, Stewart 8-65, Campbell 11-58, Jones 3-11, Cervantes 4-0. SBHS: Uribe 7-15, Leonard 7-69, Lindberg 2-3, Bisquera 2-7, Lucatero 2-7, Nelson 4-21.
PASSING — Oxnard: Stewart 8-13-0-197. SBHS: Uribe 28-46-1-226; Nelson 4-9-0-103.
RECEIVING — Oxnard: Smith 5-165, McCowan 2-27, Salanoa 1-5. SBHS: Lloyd 17-165, Nelson 5-23, Lindberg 3-20, Leonard 4-39, Maldonado 2-78, Mendoza 1-2.
MISSED FIELD GOALS — None
TEAM RECORDS — Oxnard 1-0, SBHS 0-1