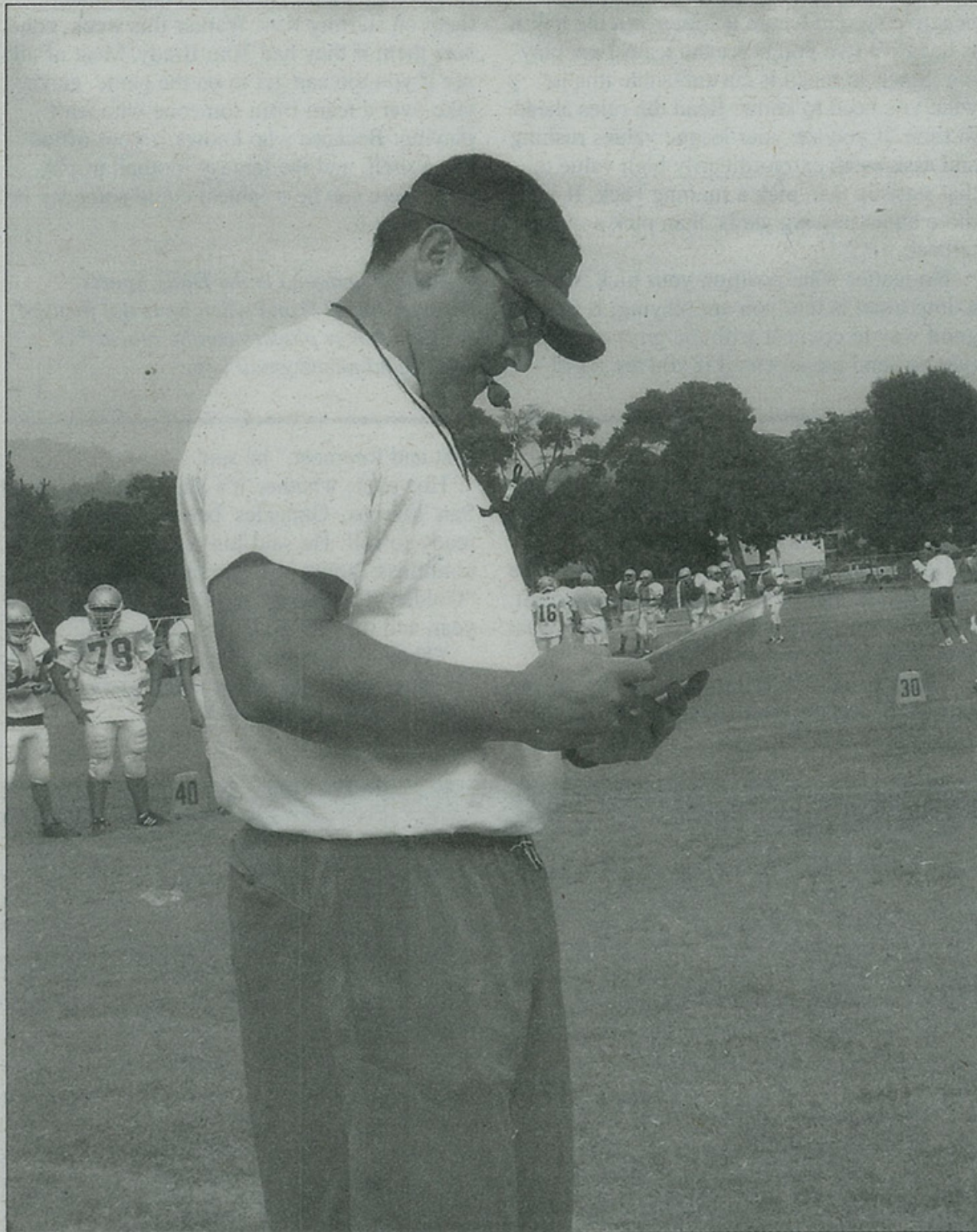


## SPORTS

## SB wants 'Golden Tornado' season



DAILY SOUND / Colby Frazier

Santa Barbara Dons head coach Will Gonzales goes over plays while his team prepares for their season opener this Friday.

BY COLBY FRAZIER

DAILY SOUND STAFF WRITER

When the Santa Barbara High School football team sprints into Peabody Stadium this Friday, chances are they'll do so with a swagger not seen on opening day at the school for years.

Why? Because the last time the Dons took the field against Newbury Park, it was the first round of the Channel League playoffs. And as is the case whenever Santa Barbara busts into the postseason, the Dons were more than mere Dons; they were the "Golden Tornado" — a decades-old nickname used whenever the team puts on the storied all-golden jerseys.

While Santa Barbara fell to the Panthers 34-14 in that game, the mere presence of the Dons in the postseason — the team's first since 2001 — was a high point for third-year Santa Barbara Head Coach Will Gonzales, who hopes for an even better run this year.

And if the current roster is any indicator, he has reason to be optimistic.

Several 2007 starters return to this year's squad, including senior quarterback John Uribe, who racked up 2,148 passing yards last season, 22 touchdowns and threw only eight interceptions.

Uribe's favorite target in 2007, Bryson Lloyd, is also back. Lloyd had 46 receptions for 646 yards and eight touchdowns. The only person with more yards was Dons basketball standout Roberto Nelson, who had 27 receptions for 689 yards and scampered into the end zone seven times.

"I feel this could be [the] most athletic and quickest team I've ever had," Gonzales said. "And I've had some good teams."

Of great importance for the Dons, according to Gonzales, is capitalizing on the passing power of Uribe.

"Anytime you have a guy who can put a ball in a very small window you're going to be successful," he said. "He has a really great feel for the game and he's a leader out there."

The Dons are set to face cross-town rival San Marcos on Nov. 7.

Gonzales said the cross-town rivalries are always difficult, especially against San Marcos, where he coached prior to taking the Santa Barbara job.

"It's a rivalry in every sense of the word," he said. "Those cross-town rivalry games are a dog fight. It doesn't matter what your record is, we know we're going to have two dogfights

there."

The Dons got the best of those dogfights last year, claiming the school's first City Championship since the late 1990s.

Beyond the local teams, the Dons will have their hands full with league champion St. Bonaventure, who pummeled the Dons last year with a 37-6 victory in Ventura.

"They're definitely the class of the league and we're going to have to contend with them

## SB SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	.....vs. Oxnard, 7 p.m.
Sept. 19	..... @ Beverly Hills, 7 p.m.
Sept. 26	.....@ Righetti, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 3	.....vs. San Luis Obispo, 7 p.m.
Oct. 10	.....@ Pacifica, 7 p.m.
Oct. 17*	.....vs. Dos Pueblos, 7 p.m.
Oct. 24*	.....@ Buena, 7 p.m.
Oct. 30*	.....vs. St. Bonaventure, 7 p.m.
Nov. 7*	.....vs. San Marcos, 5 p.m.
Nov. 14*	.....vs. Ventura, 7 p.m.

All home games at Santa Barbara High  
\* = Conference Game

The arsenal of offensive weapons doesn't stop there. It includes double-threat Freddy Maldonado, a senior wide receiver and running back transfer from Carpinteria. Maldonado will also appear on the other side of the ball as a defensive back.

A duo of seniors who Gonzales expects to be big offensive contributors this year includes running back Robert Bisquera and wide receiver Andrew Mendoza.

If the likes of Uribe, Lloyd, Nelson and Maldonado are the spark plugs of the Dons' offensive scheme, then veteran offensive and defensive linemen Juan Hernandez and Memo Gutierrez are the pistons.

Gonzales said he's confident both lines will hold ground and offer adequate protection, qualities he said are a "big part of your battle in high school football."

But the Dons, who finished 2007 with a 7-4 record, have their work cut out before clinching another playoff berth.

This year's schedule features the same opponents as last season, with a challenging preseason that starts with Oxnard at 7 p.m. this Friday. Last year the Dons got the best of

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## DONS

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Oxnard in a 9-6-grudge match.

Other preseason opponents include Beverly Hills, Righetti, San Luis Obispo and Pacifica; all of whom Gonzales said made the playoffs in 2007.

And league play won't be any easier. It begins Oct. 17 at home against Dos Pueblos.