

# Dons' air assault rocks SLO

Uribe rewrites record book in Santa Barbara's big win

By DENNIS BATEMAN  
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Santa Barbara county has seen plenty of great quarterbacks in its history. While names like Randall Cunningham, Mark Brunell, and Bradlee Van Pelt have put their name in the record books, none of them had a day quite like John Uribe. Footballs flew early and often Friday night at Peabody Stadium as the Dons senior quarterback shattered two county passing records and tying another in a 51-21 rout of San Luis Obispo.

"Wow! I had that much?" said Uribe when told that he had broken county single-game marks for passing yards (574) and touchdown passes (seven). "I guess it was just one of those days where all of us were making it happen."

Before a vocal homecoming crowd, the Dons (1-3) hoped to make it happen after starting the season with three straight losses. Following the opening kickoff, running back Kyle Leonard ran twice for 17 yards and caught three Uribe passes for 34 yards. The last catch covered three yards and Santa Barbara had a 7-0 lead less than two minutes into the game.

After the Dons defense forced a punt, Uribe began to spread the ball around to his many weapons. But even after the team's leading receiver Bryson Lloyd went down with a high ankle sprain midway through the first period, Santa Barbara showed plenty of mettle as Uribe connected on a 40-yard pass play to Roberto Nelson, which led to Uribe connecting again with Leonard, this time from five yards out.

The Tigers (2-2) got a big pass play to cross midfield on their ensuing drive, but Lenny Vargas forced a fumble on SLO running back Nate Nunno that was recovered by Fil Monterosa. On the next play, Uribe caught receiver Freddy Maldonado for a 60-yard score. Uribe got his fourth touchdown pass of the quarter, hitting Andrew Mendoza on a 21-yard strike and a 29-0 lead.

With plenty of fireworks on offense, the Dons defense showed their own explosiveness. After giving up an average of 40 points over its first three games, Santa Barbara's defenders were not in a generous mood. As the first quarter ended, the Tigers' Nunno rambled 44 yards



MIKE ELIASON

Please see **DONS** on C4 Dons quarterback John Uribe threw for 574 yards and seven touchdowns, both new county records.

## Uribe breaks county records for passing yards, touchdown passes

### ■ DONS

Continued from Page C1

to put his team deep into Dons territory, but Santa Barbara linebacker Dustin Kelly ended the drive with back-to-back sacks of quarterback David Schultz, the second of which resulted in a fumble to end SLO's best drive of the first quarter.

"It just felt great to come out and play like this. I felt like finally, everything we've been working on in the offseason and the first few weeks was finally coming together," Kelly said.

Kelly's forced fumble led to yet another Uribe score, a two-yard pass to Maldonado and a 36-0 lead.

Uribe had compiled 253 yards in the first quarter alone, and 356 by halftime. While already the county's leader in passing yards, the second-year starting signal-caller took his game to a whole new level. Spreading the wealth to seven different receivers, he connected on 17 of his first 18 passes (the one incompleting being a dropped screen pass).

And even when things went wrong, they went right for Uribe. Twice in the game, he covered missed extra points and threw for two-point conversions, connecting both times with Ralph Padilla.

"Any time John is on, we get things going. Our strength is our passing game, and we were going to go with that," said Dons head coach Will Gonzales.

With a 36-7 lead, Santa Barbara was not in the mood to rest on its accomplishments. Backed up at their own seven-yard line, Uribe unloaded a 77-yard bomb to Nelson, which set up a 16-yard scoring pass from Uribe to Mendoza.

On that play, Uribe broke the county's single-game passing record of 438 yards set by St. Joseph's Dustin Kelly against Santa Ynez in 2001. It also tied the county's single-game touchdown pass record set by Santa Maria's Bobby Silvas in 1949 and equalled by Henry Gonzales of Carpinteria in 1979.

San Luis Obispo scored a pair of fourth quarter touchdowns to pull within 44-21. But as if for an encore, Santa Barbara's Uribe replayed some greatest hits on one final drive, connecting with Maldonado for 48 yards. Two plays later, Uribe found Nelson in the corner of the end zone for his seventh touchdown pass of the game.

Uribe would leave Peabody Stadium with the county record in touchdown passes, finishing 28-for-36 and establishing a new county record of 574 passing yards.

Nelson had six catches on the night for 227 yards, including four that went for 40 yards or more. Mendoza finished the game with six catches for 105 yards and two scores.

The win was a resounding chorus for the Dons after several weeks of being off key.

"There was three weeks of frustration bottled up in those guys tonight. We were probably the best 0-3 team out there, but I knew we were better than our record," said Gonzales.

While Santa Barbara proved it was better than its 1-3 record, John Uribe, for one night, had the best game every played by a county quarterback.

"Everyone was great out there, and big ups to Andrew (Mendoza) who had to step in and help when Bryson went out. I can't complain about anything tonight," Uribe said.

Neither can fans of Santa Barbara Dons football.

e-mail: [dbateman@newspress.com](mailto:dbateman@newspress.com)



MIKE ELIASON / NEWS-PRESS

Santa Barbara's Kyle Leonard scores on the first of John Uribe's seven touchdown passes against San Luis Obispo, a new county record.