

# Big Game



## Dons offense goes bonkers in “Big Game”

November 7, 2008 by [Blake Dorfman - PRESIDIO SPORTS](#)

John Uribe had a lot of fun on Friday night.

The Santa Barbara High quarterback sat back in shotgun formation and rifled the ball an even 50 times, picking apart the San Marcos secondary for 34 completions for 524 yards and six touchdowns.

And that was after his top receiver went down with an ankle sprain on the third play of the game.

Sure, Bryson Lloyd had catches of 27 and 24 yards already at that point, but Roberto Nelson, Andrew Mendoza and Freddy Maldonado stepped up and provided Uribe with plenty of weaponry as the Dons won “The Big Game” 49-28 at Peabody Stadium. The win puts the Dons in the playoffs and also gives them their first back-to-back city title since 1988-89.

“It’s so much fun,” said Uribe of playing in such a pass-happy offense. “Just flinging the ball 50 times a game feels good. It’s what I do and I enjoy it so much.”

His name will now be immortalized on the Gary Blades Memorial Award trophy given annually to the game’s MVP, and the senior also cracked the county record books in a big way on the big stage. His six scoring passes gave him 36 on the season, one more than Carpinteria’s Henry Gonzales threw in the 1979 season. Uribe also passed DP’s Shane Lopes on the single-season passing yardage front. He now has 3,316 on the year, cruising past Lopes’ mark of 3,084 set in 2001.

He can pad the records out a little more next week as the Dons wrap up the regular season against a tough Ventura squad.

Uribe’s counterpart, San Marcos quarterback James Crook, also put up strong numbers with 245 yards and three touchdown passes, and he took advantage of a pair of blown coverages by the Dons to hook up with Austin Nichols on touchdown passes of 42 and 30 yards in the first half. Both quarterbacks threw an interception.

Nichols had 134 receiving yards on the evening.

Royals coach Dare Holdren was upset with Santa Barbara’s play-calling in the waning minutes of the game, as the Dons (4-5, 3-1) continued to throw the ball and went for an onside kick with just a few minutes remaining. Just before walking off the field, Holdren pointed to Uribe and Nelson shaking hands with the Royals coaches and remarked how he thought it was classy.

“I would say that the players, this is very classy... But I think it’s not very classy to run a surprise onside and then throw the ball in the last two minutes when you’re up by 21, okay? But congratulations to the players,” he said.

Gonzales, who held Holdren’s position before coming to Santa Barbara High, was unapologetic.

“That’s what we do, and they’ve gotta understand that I owe them zero. This is our offense and we’re not gonna apologize to anybody. I can’t think about that right now because I’ve gotta think about Ventura. I can’t worry about what other people think. If I did, I wouldn’t have taken this job,” he said.

When asked about the onside kick, Gonzales said that “we just wanted the ball back because it’s all about possessions.”

Lloyd was not the only Dons standout who left the game due to injury, as top linebacker Ian Echternacht went down with what looked like an ankle injury in the first half and spent the rest of the game on crutches. Maldonado, who was a big-play machine in the game, also hurt his ankle towards the end of the game.

“This feels real good other than the fact that my ankle’s super-sprained right now,” said Maldonado. “Hopefully we can carry this momentum into the Ventura game and just smash ‘em.”

There were a lot of big plays in the game for the Dons, and Maldonado had the ones with the biggest exclamation points attached. He returned a punt 52 yards for a touchdown to put the Dons up 14-0 in the first quarter, then caught a seven-yard touchdown pass on fourth-and-four in the second.

Just before the half, Maldonado burned the San Marcos secondary and caught a majestic, spiraling deep ball from Uribe and took it all the way for an 80-yard score. But Maldonado didn’t make much of his performance afterwards.

“I didn’t really step up that much. I just did my job, but (Mendoza) stepped into Bryson’s position and just played awesome,” he said.

At 5-9 and 140 pounds, Mendoza is six inches shorter and 90 pounds lighter than Lloyd, but he came up big, catching a pair of touchdown passes and also making an impressive catch with four minutes remaining in the third quarter.

Uribe was forced out of the pocket and scrambled right. Just before he stepped out of bounds, Mendoza appeared 20 yards down the sideline and hauled in a laser-beam pass that set up one of Nelson’s two touchdown catches.

“With Bryson being such a big player somebody had to fill his shoes, and they’re big shoes,” said Mendoza.

Santa Barbara went up early when Nelson caught a Uribe pass and juked his way to a 20-yard touchdown to cap Santa Barbara’s opening drive. Maldonado’s punt return and a 2-point conversion from Uribe to Mendoza would make it 14-0, but San Marcos got on the board with 1:22 left on Nichols’ 42-yard catch.

The Royals tied it up when Nichols got open once again early in the second, but Maldonado caught the fourth-and-four score to put Santa Barbara up 21-14. Uribe found Mendoza on a 13-yard touchdown and then threw the 80-yarder to Maldonado to make it 35-14 at the break.

San Marcos stayed in the game by capitalizing on some defensive breakdowns from the Dons, and running back Kyle Miller joined Cody Clark in running hard in the second half for the Royals, but the visitors just couldn’t catch up with the Santa Barbara offense.

**SANTA BARBARA 49, SAN MARCOS 28**

San Marcos.....7 7 7 7 — 28

Santa Barbara.....14 21 7 7 — 49

**First Quarter**

SB — Nelson 20 pass from Uribe (PAT no good), 9:12

SB — Maldonado 52 punt return (Mendoza pass from Uribe), 4:54

SM — Nichols 42 pass from Crook (Suarez kick), 4:54

**Second Quarter**

SM — Nichols 30 pass from Crook (Suarez kick), 11:34

SB — Maldonado 7 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 7:49

SB — Mendoza 13 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 4:16

SB — Maldonado 80 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 1:44

**Third Quarter**

SB — Nelson 2 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 3:24

SM — Day 6 pass from Crook (Suarez kick), 1:05

**Fourth Quarter**

SM — Miller 5 run (Suarez kick), 6:14

SB — Mendoza 26 pass from Uribe (Custodio kick)

**TEAM TOTALS SM SB**

First Downs 18 30

Rushes-Yards 32-153 23-68

Passing Yards 247 524

Comp-Att-Int 11-24-1 34-51-1

Penalties -Yards 7-50 14-136

**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** — SM: Clark 21-77, Polizzi 1-4, Miller 7-37, Hernandez 1-3, Day 2-32. SB: Uribe 13-33, Leonard 4-12, Lucatero 2-10, Maldonado 4-13.

**PASSING** — SM: Crook 11-24-1-245. SB: Uribe 34-50-1-524, Nelson 0-1-0-0.

**RECEIVING** — SM: Day 3-71, Hernandez 1-0, Nichols 5-134, Cavalier 2-27, Kirkwood 1-13. SB: Lloyd 2-51, Mendoza 8-167, Maldonado 5-118, Nelson 9-118, Lucatero 3-20, Frecker 1-13, Leonard 3-22, Garcia 2-15.

**MISSED FG** — SM: 41, 41.

