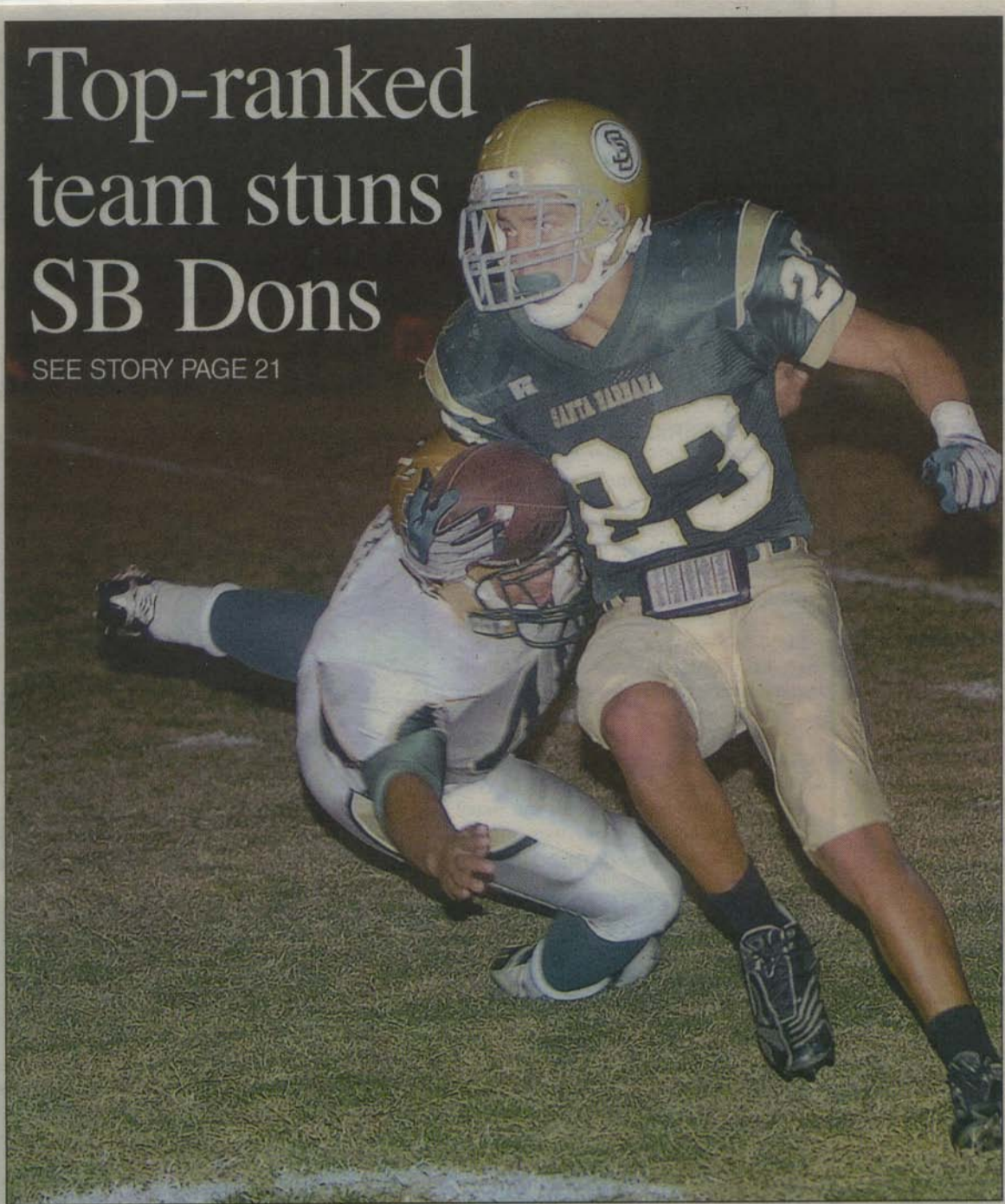


Top-ranked team stuns SB Dons

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Dons fall to top-ranked team, 51-21

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DAILY SOUND STAFF WRITER

The St. Bonaventure Seraphs entered Peabody Stadium last night as the 38th ranked team in the country and looked every bit the part.

It didn't matter whether they were fielding kick-offs, rumbling down the field on offense, or stifling Santa Barbara's usually high-powered offense, the Seraphs established its stranglehold on the Channel League with a 51-21 victory over the Dons.

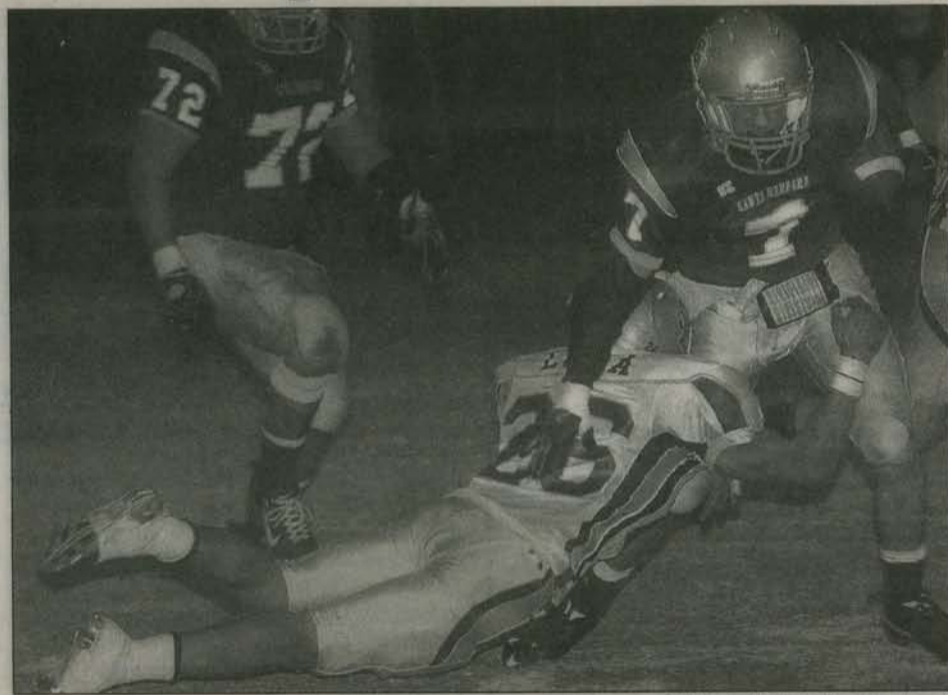
St. Bonaventure racked up 458 total yards to Santa Barbara's 282, and rallied behind three touchdowns from Devon Blackledge.

But Blackledge wasn't the whole story. Three other Seraphs piled on scores, and even when St. Bonaventure's second-string offensive corps was in the game, yardage continued to pile up. On the defensive side, the Seraphs successfully put pressure on Santa Barbara quarterback John Uribe, who was 26-of-55 with three touchdowns and two interceptions.

The Dons, who have averaged 33 points per game, tied its season low of 21, while the Seraphs, who have averaged 30.5 points per game, scored its season high against the Dons.

Santa Barbara head coach Will Gonzales said the theme of the night boiled down to the number of weapons standing on the St. Bonaventure sideline.

"They sure have a lot of athletes," he said. "[We're] playing an all-star team. That's no



DAILY SOUND / Victor Maccharoli
Santa Barbara running back Kyle Leonard tries to escape a St. Bonaventure defender in their 51-21 loss. On the front page, Santa Barbara wide receiver Freddy Maldonado takes the ball up field on a kickoff return.

joke. They got points every which way because they got athletes every which way."

The closest Santa Barbara got to staying in winning position came in the first six minutes

of the first quarter when they stopped St. Bonaventure after nearly intercepting one ball and forcing a fumble.

Santa Barbara punted the ball on its first pos-

session, and with exactly six minutes remaining in the quarter, St. Bonaventure quarterback Logan Meyer found USC-bound running back Patrick Hall for a 10-yard touchdown pass.

On Santa Barbara's next possession, the Dons rattled off nine plays, including a clutch fourth-down conversion, but ultimately turned the ball over while attempting to convert a second time on fourth down.

St. Bonaventure wasted little time making the Dons pay. Meyer handed off to Blackledge, who rumbled down the far sideline for a 54-yard touchdown to give the Seraphs a 14-0 lead.

With three seconds remaining in the first quarter, St. Bonaventure attempted to punt, but a botched snap gave Santa Barbara stellar field position at the Seraphs' 30-yard-line.

On the first play, Uribe took to the air and found wide receiver Roberto Nelson in the end zone for Santa Barbara's first score.

But just as the Dons looked to make a game of it, Blackledge fielded the kickoff at the St. Bonaventure 30-yard-line and dashed down the sideline for a 70-yard touchdown run, bringing the score to 21-7.

The Seraphs' second special teams score of the night came less than a minute later after the Dons punted the ball into the arms of St. Bonaventure wide receiver Isaiah Burton, who sprinted for a 65-yard touchdown.

St. Bonaventure head coach Todd Therrien commended his team for executing well on spe-

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cial teams, but said he wasn't surprised.

"Every single one of our guys are a threat to score when they get the ball in their hands," he said.

St. Bonaventure scored the last point of the first half with seven minutes remaining on an 8-yard run by Hall, his second touchdown of the night, which left the score at 34-7.

If the Dons were hoping to open up the second half with a statement, it didn't work out.

On the first play, Uribe tossed an interception, which St. Bonaventure turned into a touchdown four plays later on a 1-yard run by Marcus Langkilde.

During the Dons' next offensive series, Uribe was sacked twice before the Dons failed to convert on fourth down.

Asked if he told his team to focus on the dangerous passing threat posed by Uribe, Therrien said putting pressure on the quarterback is a priority every week, no matter whom they're playing.

With 8:10 remaining in the third quarter Blackledge tacked on another score, a 29-yard rushing touchdown to bring the score to 48-7.

On the Seraphs' next possession, field goal kicker Derek Kirk came up short on a 49-yard attempt, which Therrien said would have been a school record.

The Dons came back to life at the beginning of the fourth quarter when Uribe found Nelson in the end zone again for a 12-yard touchdown.

Kirk redeemed himself on the Seraph's next possession when he nailed a 38-yard field goal, which rounded out scoring for St. Bonaventure.

Uribe tossed his third touchdown pass

of the evening, a 14-yard rocket to Kyle Leonard to leave the score at 51-21.

While there's little doubt the game was well over at this point, Therrien put Blackledge back into the game, a decision that infuriated some Santa Barbara fans, and didn't go unnoticed by Gonzales.

"I think they're pretty much indifferent to the score," he said of the Seraphs.

Asked about putting Blackledge back in, Therrien said two of his tailbacks got injured, and whenever he puts Hall into the game opponents get really mad, so he essentially had no other choice.

"You've got to have somebody [out there]," he said.

Despite the loss, Gonzales said he was proud of the Dons for showing some fight down the stretch.

"Although the score was lopsided, they didn't quit," he said. "And that's all a coach can ask."