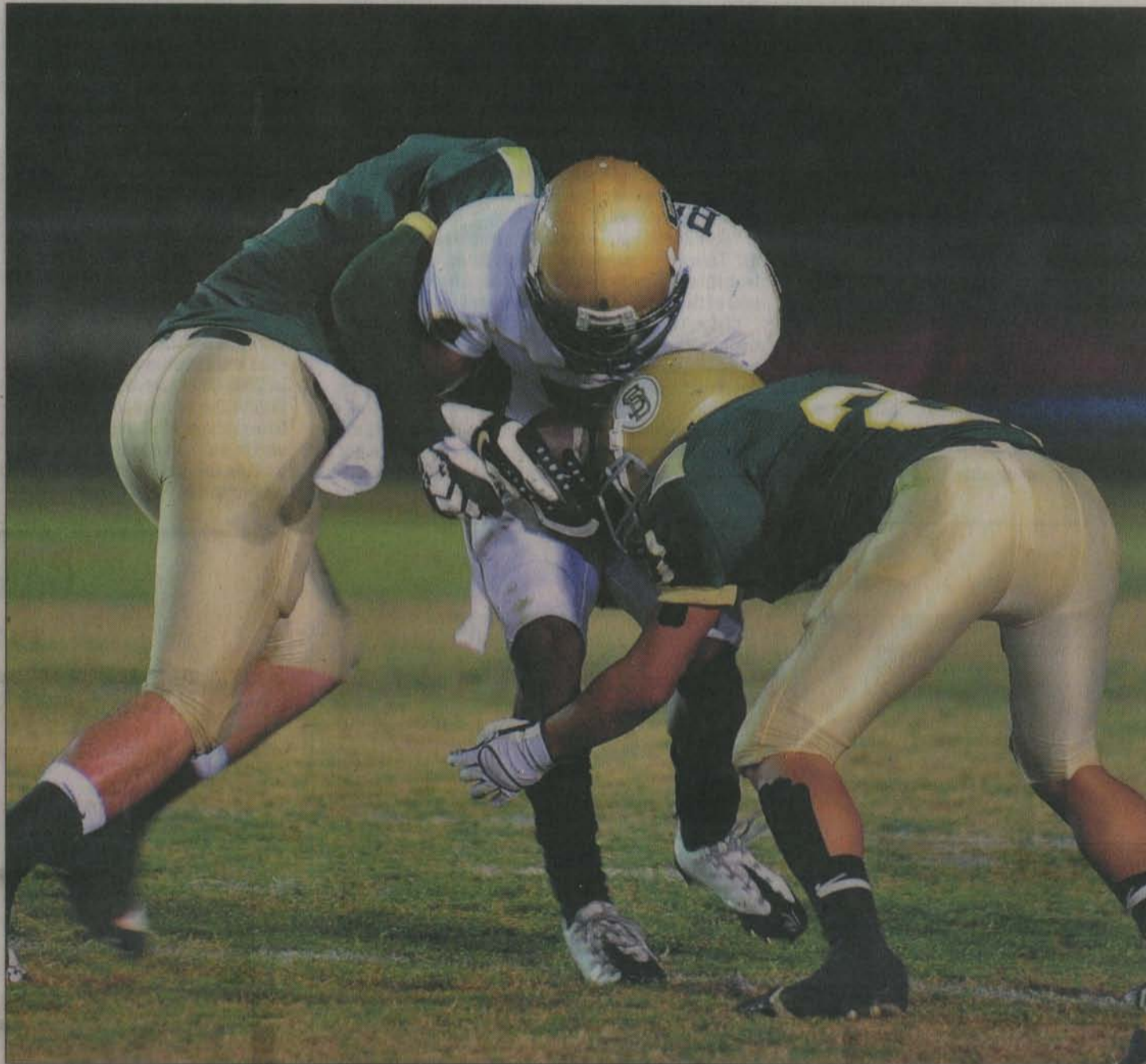


Feeling the Crunch



ROBBY BARTHELMESS/NEWS-PRESS

Santa Barbara's Bryson Lloyd, left, and Ralph Padilla sandwich St. Bonaventure's Isaiah Burton in one of the few bright moments the Dons enjoyed during their 51-21 loss on Thursday night.

Top-ranked St. Bonaventure lives up to its billing in 51-21 rout of Santa Barbara

By DENNIS BATEMAN
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Like every varsity football team that's ever faced St. Bonaventure in Channel League play, Santa Barbara was hopeful for victory as it stepped onto the turf Thursday night. But like every other time, the Dons went away on the short end of the scoreboard, as the vaunted Seraphs again demonstrated why they are among the state's top-rated teams in a 51-21 victory at Peabody Stadium.

Though both teams entered the matchup with two straight wins to open Channel League play, it was readily apparent that St. Bonaventure (7-1, 3-0), the top-ranked team in the CIF-SS Northern Division, was once again heavily stocked with its usual variety of blue-chip players.

"I wish it were something schematic, or something that we could analyze, but they just have a lot of good athletes and if you don't have enough to match them, it's going to be tough," Dons coach Will Gonzales said.

If there was any chance for Santa Barbara to get a jump on the Seraphs, it was on the opening drive. Fullback Marcus Langkilde fumbled on the opening play, but St. Bonaventure recovered. The Seraphs soon moved the ball to midfield, but a Logan Meyer pass over the middle was nearly intercepted.

St. Bonaventure would rarely be so generous again, as it held the Dons to a punt on their first drive. Nolan Rodarte returned the John Uribe pooch 26 yards.

Five plays later, Patrick Hall took a dump-off pass from Meyer, broke a tackle and scampered 10 yards into the end zone.

After the Dons drove to midfield before failing to convert on fourth down, St. Bonaventure struck quickly when Devon Blackledge raced 54 yards for a touchdown and a 14-0 lead.

It seemed that the best defense against the Seraphs were their own miscues. Penalized over a dozen times, St. Bonaventure negated several long gains.

An errant snap in the closing seconds of the first quarter gave Santa



Dons TE Bryson Lloyd: 9 catches, 91 yards

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Seraphs again overwhelm Dons

■ DONS

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Barbara a first-and-10 on the Seraph 31. From there, the Dons cashed in as Uribe hit wide receiver Roberto Nelson in the end zone for a touchdown on the quarter's final play.

Whatever momentum the Dons hoped to gain after halving St. Bonaventure's lead evaporated on the first play of the second quarter. Santa Barbara kicked a high floater that fell into the hands of Blackledge, who cut across the field and picked up a wall of Seraph blockers and ran the kickoff back 74 yards.

Pinned back deep in their territory, the Dons failed to advance the ball and Uribe punted again, and this time it was Isaiah Burton taking the kick and outracing Don defenders to the end zone for a 63-yard punt return and a 28-7 lead.

"Every one of our guys out there believes that they are a threat to score," said St. Bonaventure head coach Todd Therrien.

The Seraphs added three more touchdowns and led by 41 going into the fourth quarter. Uribe threw two touchdowns in the final period and finished with 261 passing yards with a pair of interceptions.

Dons workhorse tight end Bryson Lloyd again did some heavy lifting on offense, catching nine passes for 91 yards. Nelson

had six catches for 120 yards and two scores.

"We didn't match up well, but even though the score was lopsided, I was proud of the way our kids competed against a very good team. They never stopped playing for a minute.

The loss to St. Bonaventure was the first of three home games for the Dons, now 2-1 in league (3-5 overall). Santa Barbara host rival San Marcos in the annual Big Game next Friday with a special start time of 5 p.m.

"We got the Big Game next week, and we'd better be up for that," Gonzales said.

ST. BONAVENTURE 51, SANTA BARBARA 21

St. Bonaventure 14 20 14 3 — 51
Santa Barbara 7 0 0 14 — 21

First Quarter

SIB—Hall 10 pass from Meyer (Kirk kick), 5:59
SIB—Blackledge 54 run (Kirk kick), 3:38
SB—Nelson 31 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), :00

Second Quarter

SIB—Blackledge 74 kickoff return (Kirk kick), 11:43
SIB—Burton 63 punt return (Kirk kick), 10:57
SIB—Hall 13 run (run failed), 5:46

Third Quarter

SIB—Langkilde 1 run (Kirk kick), 10:52
SIB—Blackledge 28 run (Kirk kick), 6:00

Fourth Quarter

SB—Nelson 12 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 11:04
SIB—FG Kirk 39, 8:08
SB—Leonard 13 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 5:50

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—SIB: Blackledge 6-109, Langkilde 10-56, Hall 3-22, Luna 3-11, Souza 3-25, Short 2-27, Henderson 1-8, L. Meyer 1-3. SB: Leonard 7-24, Uribe 5-(-12).
PASSING—SIB: Meyer 13-20-1-108, Souza 3-4-0-11. SB: Uribe 25-48-2-261.
RECEIVING—SIB: Burton 4-36, Langkilde 3-27, Z. Meyer 3-25, Rodarte 1-12, Hall 1-10, Blackledge 2-7, Gibson 1-6, Ledesma 1-(-4). SB: Lloyd 9-91, Nelson 7-130, Leonard 6-36, Lucatero 2-11, Mendoza 1-5. B: Davis 2-20, Norris 1-56, Robles 1-16, Leiser 1-9, Perry 1-7.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—Kirk 49.



ROBBY BARTHELMESS/NEWS-PRESS

St. Bonaventure's Isaiah Burton (5) sprints downfield past teammate Troy Hill and Santa Barbara defender Roberto Nelson for a 63-yard punt return for a touchdown.