

Dons succumb to Cougars, 52-28

November 16, 2008 by [Blake Dorfman - PRESIDIO SPORTS](#)



VENTURA — The Dons may have had some smoke still in their eyes.

Meanwhile, Patrick Peterson's eyes were as big as saucers.

The Ventura defensive back picked off four passes on Saturday as the Cougars picked off second place in the Channel League with a 52-28 win over Santa Barbara at Larrabee Stadium. The result will leave Santa Barbara with a tougher seed heading into the CIF playoffs.

The game was originally to be played at Peabody Stadium on Friday night, but was pushed back a day and south about 25 miles due to the Tea Fire. Dons coach Will Gonzales said that several of his players were up late Thursday after evacuating. Thankfully, none of the Dons lost their homes.

"I wish I could say we came to play today but we didn't," said Gonzales. "A lot happened in our town, and I think we came out feeling a little sorry for ourselves because we lost the home game."

Santa Barbara quarterback John Uribe had already broken the single-season county records for passing yards and touchdowns in last week's win over San Marcos, and added a less-meaningful one to his resume on Saturday — most passing attempts in a single game.

Uribe went 31-for-55 with 380 yards and four touchdowns to go along with the four picks, two of which came on Hail-Mary tosses. The state's leading passer, Uribe was honored this week as the ESPN RISE State Boys Athlete of the Week.

"You throw the ball 55 times and you're going to have to take some chances," said Gonzales of the interceptions.

Uribe's favorite target was star tight end and receiver Bryson Lloyd, who shook off a nagging ankle injury and hobbled his way to 173 yards on 14 catches. Roberto Nelson had six catches for 68 yards and a pair of touchdowns for the Dons, who did not call a running play until their final drive of the game.

Santa Barbara (4-6, 3-2) got on the board first at the 9:52 mark of the first quarter, when the Dons completed an impressive march downfield with a 19-yard pass that was tipped by Andrew Mendoza and into the hands of Peter Garcia for a touchdown.

The Dons forced a Cougar punt thanks to a big sack by Lenny Vargas and a huge hit by Spencer Kelly, but Peterson picked off his first pass of the night a few plays later and Ventura took over on the Santa Barbara 40. The Cougars (6-4, 4-1) would pick up a pair of touchdown runs to go up 14-7, But Nelson caught a 10-yard jump ball from Uribe as the first quarter expired to knot it up.

Santa Barbara defenders made a handful of great tackles for losses all night, but a big play always seemed within the Cougars' reach. E.J. Turner broke free up the sideline for a 70-yard touchdown early in the second. Nelson responded with a leaping catch at the other end of the field on a 21-yard pass from Uribe, but the Dons couldn't hold off Ventura before the half.

A big-time tackle by Sam Lindberg had the Cougars on their heels in the final minute of the second quarter, but the big play came through again when Matt Melnar took a pass from Keihan Gibbs 23 yards to put Ventura ahead 28-21 at the break.

The Dons hung tough early in the third, holding Ventura to a field goal after a long opening drive. On the next Santa Barbara drive, Uribe found himself running back-and-forth for a solid eight seconds at the Ventura six-yard line, finally finding an open receiver and tossing a score to Freddy Maldonado to make it 31-28 in favor of the Cougars.

Uribe, who also played safety, nabbed a tackle for a three-yard loss and the Dons would get the ball back with a chance to go up, but Uribe threw a pick on a bizarre play which wound up an offensive pass interference and offsetting unsportsmanlike-conduct flags. The Cougars scored, and Santa Barbara's sideline went from very emotional to emotionally drained soon after.

Playoff brackets are scheduled to be released Sunday morning.

(Photo by Blake Dorfman/PresidioPics)

VENTURA 52, SANTA BARBARA 28

Ventura.....14 14 3 21 — 52

Santa Barbara...14 7 7 0 — 28

First Quarter

SB—Garcia 19 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 9:52

V—Melnar 1 run (Mann kick), 3:54

V—Melnar 34 run (Mann kick), 1:34

SB—Nelson 10 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 0:00

Second Quarter

V—Turner 70 run (Mann kick)

SB—Nelson 21 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 2:15

V—Melnar 23 pass from Gibbs (Mann kick), 0:07

Third Quarter

V—Mann 23 kick, 4:58

SB—Maldonado 6 pass from Uribe (Chandler kick), 3:18

Fourth Quarter

V—Gibbs 1 run (Mann kick), 9:55

V—Reyes 38 pass from Gibbs (Mann kick), 8:27

V—Melnar 1 run (Mann kick), 1:49

TEAM STATISTICS V SB

First Downs 21 18

Rushes-Yards 53-371 8-(-31)

Passing Yards 105 380

Comp-Att-Int 6-8-0 31-55-4

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—V: Turner 6-136, Melnar 29-146, Castillo 4-23, Reyes 6-43, Gibbs 7-17, Vazquez 1-6. SB:

Uribe 6-(-31), Perez 1-0.

PASSING—V: Gibbs 6-8-0-105. SB: Uribe 31-55-4-380.

RECEIVING—V: Vazquez 1-14, Melnar 3-47, Reyes 2-44. SB: Lloyd 14-173, Mendoza 5-61, Garcia 2-31, Nelson 6-68, Abonce 1-3, Maldonado 3-32, Perez 2-12.

MISSED FG—None.

TEAM RECORDS—V 6-4, 4-1; SB 4-6, 3-2.