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Matadors Escape in Opener Versus Antioch

By Toby Wendtland



Eric Severson (55), Zack Purdy (58), Jeff Lindow (50) Photo Sheryl Cardiff

Once again the Friday night lights were shining down on the Miramonte Matadors as they hosted the Antioch Panthers in their season opener on Sept. 5. Trying to improve upon their 5- 5-1 record from a season ago and return to their 2006 form, when the Mats were NCS champions, the team held on as Antioch's fourth and nine pass was broken up by James King with 23 seconds left on the clock, turning the ball over to the Mats and securing an opening night victory, 31-28. The Matadors got the scoring started when John Coupin broke off a 39 yard run through the right side for Miramonte's first touchdown of the season with 3:53 left in the first quarter. An early second quarter field goal by Matt Lloyd made it 10-0 before Antioch scored a touchdown on a quarterback keeper, drawing the Panthers within three. After each team turned the ball over on consecutive possessions, King made the Panthers pay by racing wide open down the right sideline for his first touchdown catch and a 17-7 halftime lead. King would finish the game with 10 catches for 160 yards and two touchdowns to go along with a team high 10 tackles. Antioch scored touchdowns on their first two possessions of the second half and grabbed a 21-17 lead before King responded with his second touchdown catch to pull the Mats ahead 24-21 with 10:29 left in the fourth quarter. A 22 yard touchdown pass from John Vaccaro (nine-of-14 for 145 yards and two TD's) to Alex Epstein with 3:21 left in the game made it 31-21 Matadors. Antioch came roaring back. The Panthers drove the ball 90 yards into the end zone, and with 55 seconds left in the game they recovered an onside kick near midfield. Then the Matadors made their final defensive stand, King breaking up the final two passes of the game and securing 2008's first victory for Coach John Wade.



Matt Lloyd (86) kicks an early second quarter field goal for the Matadors Photo Sheryl Cardiff



Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

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