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Acalanes Football Loses at Home, Wins on Road

By Justine Sgalio



Mike Leamy (7) and coach Mike Ivankovich
Photo Andy Scheck

In a rebuilding year, the Acalanes Dons varsity football team looked to start the season with a win. While the Dons, under new head coach Mike Ivankovich, put in a strong showing they could not produce a victory against the Aptos Mariners on Friday, September 4th, losing 21-19, but bounced back with a 35-20 win against Justin Siena on Friday, September 11th.

Acalanes started their opener with solid defense and offense. They held the Mariners scoreless in the first quarter and got on the board first with a touchdown. Junior wide receiver Trent Baker grabbed a 32 yard touchdown pass from junior quarterback Michael Leamy with 1:35 on the clock. A good point-after (PAT) gave the Dons a 7-0 lead.

The Mariners stormed back with 10:30 to go in the second quarter, tying the game up off running back Evan Mehl's touchdown. The Dons were not quiet for long, as senior running back Bo McSwine scored on a 15 yard touchdown run just minutes later. The Dons failed on the extra point

attempt but still expanded their lead heading into the locker room, 13-7.

The third quarter remained scoreless through the six minute mark until a long Aptos drive resulted in a touchdown by Mariners running back Zach Powell. The successful PAT allowed the Mariners to take a one point advantage, 14-13, leading into the fourth quarter.

Acalanes tried to come back offensively, but were slowed by two penalties and a fumble that recovered by the Mariners. Mistakes did not keep the Dons from getting the ball back, however, as Baker quickly grabbed an interception. Their momentum was checked by yet another fumble, recovered by the Mariners, with just over four minutes to go in the game.

The miscue cost the Dons, as Aptos quarter back Miles Norton made a short run in for a Mariner touchdown, pushing the visitor's lead to 21-13 with just under two minutes to go.

The Dons did not throw in the towel. Acalanes offense answered back on the next possession when Dons senior running back Nate Boone scored on a six yard touchdown run, cutting the Mariner lead to 21-19. The Dons attempted a two point conversion to tie the game, but were unsuccessful. Acalanes then attempted an onside kick, but were unable to regain possession and therefore the lead.

"You always want to win," said Acalanes head coach Mike Ivankovich. "But it's high school football. Everyone wants to be successful. You have to come out and get it done on that night. I don't think we didn't get it done, I would just say they got it done a little bit better than we did."

Despite multiple penalties and being down at halftime, the Dons came away with a 35-20 win over Justin Siena Friday night for their first win of the season.

"Our kids worked so hard," said Ivankovich. "It was a team effort. Everyone was executing their assignments and playing physical. We just wore the other team down."

The Dons came back strong in the second half, scoring 28 unanswered points-seven in the third quarter and 21 in the fourth.

"It was a huge improvement from last week," said Ivankovich. "We tried to focus on playing physical; not worrying about the score or our individual plays, but being a physical football team. We did that on Friday night and I'm really proud of our team. We overcame a lot of adversity."

The Dons head to Albany to take on St. Mary's High on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.



Kick by Ben Ewing, 7:0 Photo Andy Scheck

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