

# SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS

## 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 re-

sulted 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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## Campolindo Quarterbacks: A Family Affair

By Lucy Amaral



Tommy Stephens, varsity quarterback (8)

Photo Doug Kohen

Campolindo High School is experiencing a unique phenomenon, two brothers starting as quarterback. "We've had brother pairs come through before," said Campolindo football head coach Kevin Macy. "But never at quarterback. To shine at quarterback is so hard; it's the toughest position. And Tommy shines. Then, to have Brett follow behind and shine, that's really rare."

Tommy and Brett Stephens, varsity and freshman football quarterbacks respectively, have stepped into the spotlight and are establishing a legacy for the Campolindo Cougars. The first game of the season, Tommy led the varsity team to a 44-15 win over Albany. Brett scrimmaged with junior varsity (JV) against Albany and helped nab a 40-8 win. He started his freshman season on September 17 against Liberty High School.

This year may be off to a strong start, but the varsity football team is young by anyone's standard. According to Macy, 21 of the 22 starting varsity players last year graduated out, leaving only Tommy as a returning starter. "We have an inexperienced team and it's nice to have a returning quarterback," said Macy. "Tommy has great knowledge of the game, not just his own position, but he understands the other positions and can help. It's like having an extra coach."

Looking at the years spent playing football, Tommy, 17, might seem to have started late. A soccer player for many years, Tommy didn't start playing football until he joined the MOL (Moraga Orinda Lafayette) flag football league in the

sixth grade. As a freshman Tommy started at the quarterback position, but after a few games was called up to JV. As a sophomore Tommy returned to the JV quarterback position but again, after a few games, was called up to varsity where he has remained since.

Macy said that Tommy's quick progression may be attributed to the fact that he is an all around good athlete and knowledgeable about the sport, but that's not what sets him above the rest. "Tommy's strength is his vision. Most high school quarterbacks will pick one receiver and stick with them," said Macy. "Tommy can see the whole field, he'll find a second, even third receiver in a progress. That's not your typical high school quarterback."

Brett, 14, has been following in his brother's footsteps, playing

MOL football and being named freshman quarterback. Brett did not receive this position because of his brother's success, but because he loves the game and, according to Macy, is talented. "At this stage he's got a lot of polish, a strong arm and does not get flustered in the pocket at all," said Macy. "Those are things you can't coach."

But wait, there's more. The next Stephens in line is 12-year-old Jack. His football career started in the third grade with MOL and now his current seventh-grade team is being coached by none other than brother, Tommy.

Is Jack destined to be a quarterback, too? Their mother Kim Stephens is not sure. "He's finding out what works for him," she said. "They put him in the quarterback positions and he's fine, however at the moment, he likes the line."



Brett Stephens, freshman quarterback

Photo Doug Kohen

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