

# Eagles Unlucky on this Friday the 13th

By Gregg McMullin

The El Segundo High School football team came into the game against South Torrance needing a little luck to share in the Pioneer League title. For that to happen, the Eagles would need to knock off the Spartans while league-leading Centennial would have to lose to Lawndale. In that scenario, there would have been a three-way tie for the title with all three teams sporting a (4-1) record. But on this Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, there was no luck or good fortune going the Eagles’ way and they lost to South 24-21 on a last second field goal. As it happened, the Eagles wound up second to Centennial anyway when the Apaches crushed Lawndale. The Eagles will enter the CIF Southern Section Northwest Division playoffs as the second place team from the Pioneer League and will travel to Ojai to play Nordoff.

Luck certainly didn’t go the Eagles’ way nor did the officiating calls. But give credit to the Spartans’ defense, which limited the Eagles to just 12 plays, one first down and a total of 63 yards of offense in the second half. “We had some tough calls and penalties go against us, but the officials didn’t lose the game—I think we had something to do with that,” said Eagle head coach Steve Shevlin.

The Eagles were flagged for penalties 11 times for 97 yards, committed turnovers and had a long field goal attempt fall just short. All of this contributed to the loss. And those penalties that the Eagles came up with all came at the absolute worst times. Both turnovers also led to points for the Spartans too.

This was the third straight year that this game had playoff implications. Although the Spartans’ season would be over with a losing record, the Eagles were poised to go into the playoffs with momentum and a probable home game with a win. Last year, the Eagles hammered the Spartans and the Spartans were awarded with a road game to Oaks Christian. Two years ago, the Eagles soundly beat South 35-14 to knock the Spartans out of the playoff picture altogether.

The first half was all El Segundo as the Eagles scored first when Nigel Nootbaar returned an interception 85 yards for a touchdown. The junior defensive back stepped in front of South receiver Boian Kolev and raced down the sideline untouched for the score.

The two teams traded possessions before the Spartans got on the scoreboard. The Eagles’ quarterback Mike Bundy threw a pass intended for Grant Palmer that was deflected and intercepted. Five plays later, Spartan QB Jon Concetti ran it in from a yard out to tie the game.

El Segundo did have good fortune on its next two possessions. The Eagles came up with great field position after a poor South Torrance punt. Starting at the Spartan 30 yard line, Bundy completed a pass to Bryce Savage for 20 yards and then found Hunter Hovland open for a 10-yard touchdown pass. On South’s ensuing possession, the Eagles once again capitalized on a turnover. On the second play from scrimmage, Nick Kessler recovered a fumble for the Eagles at the

Spartan 25. On the first play, Bundy lofted a high pass in the corner of the end zone and Hovland came down with it for another touchdown and a 21-7 Eagle lead.

The momentum and highlights for El Segundo came to an end in the second half. The Spartans went on a methodical 17-play drive that covered 85 yards and ate up over seven minutes of the third quarter. South’s junior running back ended the long series with a 17-yard touchdown run to cut El Segundo’s deficit to 21-14.

The Eagles couldn’t get anything going on offense in a third quarter in which they had just one five-play possession. The fourth quarter wasn’t much better, but they did have a 47-yard field goal attempt come up short.

The Spartans pulled out the trick book on their game-tying touchdown drive. During the 12-play drive, South faked a sweep and then threw the ball to its streaking quarterback for a 28-yard gain. Also during the drive, the Eagles were flagged for a very questionable pass interference call with the defender clearly having better position on the South receiver. That penalty led to a first down and two plays later, the Spartans scored on a short run.

Jimmy Quiñones returned the ensuing kickoff back to the 50 yard line and put the Eagles in great field position with 3:20 left in the game. On the first play, Bundy found Savage open over the middle for a 26-yard gain. As Savage was being tackled, the ball squirted loose and was recovered by the Spartans. It looked as if Savage’s knee was down prior to the ball popping out, but it was another official’s call that went awry against the Eagles.

South made the most of the opportunity while the Eagles’ defense looked hopelessly tired from being on the field 40 plays in the second half. Two consecutive penalties doomed the Eagles and put the Spartans down on the Eagle’s 13 yard line with under a minute to play. With nine seconds left in the game, Ryan Musick connected on a 27-yard field goal to win the game for South 24-21.

It was by far the worst half of football for the Eagles this year, but the outcome might have been different had a number of questionable calls not gone against them. “We didn’t play our best game, but I wish the officials would have let the players decide the game,” said one assistant coach.

The Eagles (6-4) enter their first round playoff game against Nordoff (8-2) on the road at 7 p.m.

The Rangers had won eight straight games going into their last game against nationally-ranked Oaks Christian, but got blown away 56-6.

Nordoff might come into the game a bit down after its loss, but has an offense capable of putting up an average of 32 points per game. The Rangers are led by quarterback Skyler Logsdon, who has thrown 27 touchdown passes this year, and a running game that averages 130 yards per game.

For directions to the game, you can call (310) 615-2662, ext. 312 or 310. •

## Railway

from front page

town spurred the City last month to issue a scathing letter opposing the project on the grounds of zoning, logistical, environmental, public safety and aesthetic issues. Staff also contended that the draft environmental impact statement/report (EIS/EIR) does not adequately address impacts from the maintenance yard operations and that it is unclear exactly which land parcels will be required for the facility. But perhaps the most pressing concern was the potential impact on the future of Plaza El Segundo’s Phase II plans and related sales tax revenues for the City.

In his “Cityscape” column in these pages last week, Mayor Kelly McDowell wrote that MTA has “an alternate site in LA City that they could use, but, as usual, an outside government agency wants to dump a lousy land use in the city of El Segundo.” He went on to bash the EIS/EIR for its perceived inadequacies, and then issued a not-so-thinly-veiled threat to take MTA to court in order to stop the project. “MTA: Think again,” he wrote. “Think really, really hard. We don’t want your rail yard. We will fight you if you persist with your crazy idea. And we will win.”

According to McDowell, he spent much of the next day following the column’s release answering emails from concerned constituents. He urged those against the rail yard to contact local City Council members as well as County Supervisor Don Knabe, who sits on MTA’s board.

Diaz as recently as late last month maintained that no other locations were feasible for the facility. “Other existing yards do not have the capacity to accommodate the additional buses or trains associated with this project,” he said at the time. However, his tune apparently changed last week when he told the *Herald* that “other locations are being looked at based on comments of concern about both the Westchester and El Segundo sites. There will be a public process to vet these alternate locations.”

Diaz went on to note that official selection of a facility site is not slated until the fall of 2010. When asked if MTA would attempt to build the project even in the face of heavy El Segundo protest, he said he could not answer “because the site hasn’t been determined yet and there is no adopted project. Metro cannot

initiate the purchase of any property until the project is adopted.” As for whether his agency might consider invoking eminent domain in order to take ownership of the property by condemning it, Diaz said, “Eminent domain is a tool available to Metro, but is a last resort.” He added that 90 to 95 percent of the agency’s past purchases have been “in good faith with the property owner.”

In this case, the key property owner in question is Rosecrans Sepulveda Partners 3, LLC (RSP), the development team behind Plaza El Segundo. The proposed rail yard could absorb roughly one-third of the land earmarked for Plaza’s planned 425,000 square foot Phase II upscale retail project. Thanks to a slow economy, that project remains in limbo. In his column, McDowell charged RSP with making “a pitch to replace much of the additional retail development at the site, which is called for by their agreement with the City, with an entirely different plan.” RSP member Dan Crosser claimed that his group “did not pitch MTA; they contacted us.” In its own letter to the El Segundo City Council several weeks ago, RSP maintained that it had not entered into any formal negotiations with MTA about selling any of the land it owns in and around the proposed site. While Diaz admitted that MTA contacted RSP a year and a half ago “to let them know the site would be considered” and that the two entities have “kept in touch periodically,” he emphasized that no formal discussions about the property were in progress. “We are prohibited from contacting sites for purchase until the process is completed,” he said.

Though a decision on the maintenance yard is perhaps a year away, Diaz said MTA may need to “environmentally clear more than one site” and update its review to clarify points of contention such as parcel definition and what the geo-technical and hazardous characteristics of the El Segundo site will be. According to the current timeframes, the project would start by the beginning of 2012 and wrap up in 2018. “There will be a revised report [after the November 18 meeting],” Diaz noted. “It says that the maintenance facility is to be included at a site to be determined. We don’t highlight any one site...and there is no site that has higher standard than any other site.”

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