

Mustangs in the Driver's Seat Against Chaminade



Kyle Demarco led the Mustangs to a 41-19 win over Chaminade.

By Gregg McMullin

The top-seeded Mira Costa Mustangs have been on a roll all year long and they continued their drive against Chaminade in a CIF Southern Section Western Division playoff quarterfinal match-up. With another stellar game from the defense and an offense that keeps churning out the points on long drives, the Mustangs (10-2) advanced to their second consecutive CIF semifinals appearance with a dominating 41-19 win.

Chaminade (7-4) moved the ball during its first series and got inside the Mustangs' 10 yard line. The Eagles did all they could do to open the game but the Mustang defense responded by making a key stop on fourth-and-goal from the one yard line. Mustang quarterback Kyle Demarco didn't waver despite starting near his own goal line and directed the offense down the field with precision. Senior fullback Kellen Lockwood got the call at the Eagles' four yard line and bulldozed his way into the end zone for his third rushing touchdown of the year.

Chaminade responded early in the second quarter with a scoring drive of its own. Eagle quarterback Jake Basmagian found his favorite receiver, Jamal McClerkin, for a 28-yard touchdown pass. Chaminade head coach Ed Croson must have thought that points would come at a premium in this game. He decided to go for a two-point conversion attempt, but the try was unsuccessful and the Mustangs clung to a 7-6 lead.

If anyone on the Chaminade side thought that the Mustangs' narrow lead would last, they were in for a rude awakening. Mira Costa dominated most of the second quarter by scoring three touchdowns, and Demarco had a hand in all three scores.

The senior quarterback ran for touchdowns of one and 11 yards and he connected with one of the South Bay's best receivers, Kyle Nunn, on a 43-yard touchdown pass to increase the lead to 27-6. The catch in the end zone was tipped up into the air and grabbed by Nunn as he fell to the ground. Chaminade wouldn't go away though, and scored on a two-yard run by Brando Tessar shortly before the second quarter ended to make it 27-13.

With a two-touchdown lead on a team that had averaged 34 points in its previous four games, Mustang coach Don Morrow wasn't about to play conservatively. On their first series to open the second half, the Mustangs went to the air. A 51-yard pass play from Demarco to Nunn set up the quarterback's third touchdown run of the night and stretch Mira Costa's lead to 34-13.

In the fourth quarter, the Mustangs used a nine-play drive to chew up the clock and score one final time. After J.R. Oshima intercepted Basmagian, Demarco directed the 52-yard series that was capped by Rico Wright's seven-yard touchdown run. On the drive, Wright carried most of the load by rushing four times for 30 yards, including the TD run.

Wright has been the workhorse for the Mustangs lately since leading rusher Morgan

Reece tweaked his ankle and has been slow to recover. Does it bother Wright that he's pulling extra duty as the team's featured running back and the safety on defense? "I welcome the challenge, but I am a bit exhausted...but I'll do anything for our team," he said.

Mira Costa turned the ball over three times on fumbles including one on a punt return, but the Mustangs were able to withstand Chaminade's offense each time. The Eagles did score one last time with 4:21 left in the game on a nine-yard run by Tessar. But even that score was contested when the ball popped lose near the goal line and recovered in the end zone by McClerkin.

The offense certainly was hitting on all cylinders with Demarco completing 8 of 10 passes for 243 yards and rushing for 94 yards and three touchdowns. Rico Wright had his best day by rushing for 183 yards and Kyle Nunn was once again the big recipient of Demarco's passing by catching five passes for 153 yards.

The Mustangs will advance to the semifinals having won nine straight games after opening the season 1-2. Mira Costa will host Palmdale (10-2), the Golden League champions, tonight (Friday, December 4) at 7:30 p.m. The Falcons needed an overtime 49-42 win over St. Francis to advance.

Mira Costa will face the fourth-seeded Falcons and a team that has pretty much mirrored the Mustangs year. Palmdale comes into the game riding an eight-game win streak and is a team capable of running the ball. Corey Washington, Joshua Shaw and Joey Garba have combined to rush for over 2,000 yards and 25 touchdowns. Shaw runs the quarterback option much like Mira Costa's Demarco does and he has thrown 12 TD passes while rushing for another nine.

The Mustangs more than match up for the Falcons, and getting a home game should give the Bay League champs the edge. Mira Costa is just one of three South Bay teams still playing with Serra (12-0) and Chadwick (11-1), the other two teams vying for a CIF finals berth.

Should Mira Costa win, it will take on the winner of the Alemany versus Dominguez game next Friday night at 7:30 p.m. A coin flip to determine the home team has already been established at the CIF office and the Mustangs will be on the road no matter who wins the other semifinal game.

Mustang News and Notes

The girls' cross country team competed at the Division II state meet and was hoping to battle and upset Saugus, the top-ranked team in the nation. Savannah Pio ran a team-best 18:02. Aleya La Croix (18:08), Aryn Foland (18:14), Shannon Hagedorn (18:33), Kelly Sugimoto (18:44), Vivian Cherrette (19:27) and Kristie Fields helped lead the Mustangs to a second place overall finish behind Saugus.

The basketball season is upon us and both the boys and girls' teams started their seasons this week. The boys hosted the Pacific Shores Tournament while the girls played in the Inglewood Holiday Classic. •

Crime Reports

HOUSE PARTY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Police responded to a residence in the 1100 block of Longfellow Drive around 8 p.m. where an officer observed about 100 teenagers drinking alcohol in the driveway of a residence. As the officers arrived, somebody yelled "Cops!" and the partygoers scattered in all directions. An officer came across a group of juveniles who said they heard there was a party and decided to attend. The juveniles told the officer they believed the owners of the residence were gone but did recall coming across their son, who was "freaked out" over the large number of guests with beer. The juveniles told the officer they decided to leave because the party was quickly being chaotic.

Police found beer cans in the driveway and some damaged landscaping. Nobody answered the door and the house was dark and locked, leading officers to believe the overwhelmed teen who sponsored the party had also fled the scene. Police tried to contact the homeowners three different times over the next several days but were unable to reach them.

BIBLE STOLEN SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

A woman was picked up by her friend at LAX and they drove to a Mexican restaurant in the 3500 block of Highland Avenue to eat lunch, leaving the SUV with a valet around 1:30 p.m. The woman placed her King James Bible on the front passenger seat of the car, which contained her US Passport, a cashier's check for \$645 and \$58 in cash. They drove home around 6 p.m. and parked in the garage. When the victim went to the car to retrieve her bible, she could not find it. She checked her luggage and found her Nikon digital camera and memory card were also missing.

The next day, the manager of the valet parking service told the victim he never had any problems with the employee who parked their car. He promised to talk to the general manager but when the victim called the general manager, the GM said he never heard from his subordinate about the theft.

BRAWLING EMPLOYEES SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Two men who used to work together at a chain Mexican restaurant in another city got into a fight next to the company's Manhattan Beach location in front of a movie theater in the 3100 block of Sepulveda Boulevard around 12:30 a.m. Although both men spoke Spanish as their primary language, they were able to talk to officers in English. The first subject, with the first name of Marcos, said he arrived at the restaurant to pick someone up from work and saw his former coworker, who has the first name of Antonio. Marcos he told police he didn't get along with Antonio when they worked together and admitted they engaged in a physical fight. He accused Antonio of throwing a bottle at him and missing.

When the officer talked to Marcos, he observed Marcos had been drinking after noticing his watery and blood shot eyes and strong odor of alcohol on his breath. The

officer reported that Antonio was belligerent and kept repeating his statements and that he took off his shirt prior to the arrival of police. Antonio declined to comment on whether or not he threw a bottle at his former coworker, but showed police a fresh bruise on his right cheek and swollen lip.

Police did not arrest either man because neither was desirous of prosecution and both lacked serious injuries.

STOLEN SEATS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

A woman last saw the third row leather seats of her black 2007 GMC Yukon around 3 p.m. Friday. Around 8:30 p.m. she went to a shopping center in Los Angeles and parked on the top of the parking structure before locking her car and arming its alarm. She returned to her home in the 1600 block of Curtis Avenue around 9:30 p.m., parked her car, locked it and armed its alarm. The next day she noticed her seats were missing, along with a tear in one of her leather passenger seats around 8:30 a.m.

EX-BOYFRIEND ACCUSED SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Around 9 a.m. on Wednesday, November 18, a woman last saw her diamond wedding from a previous marriage and Rolex watch in her apartment in the 200 block of 41st Street. She noticed the items were missing on Saturday morning when she discovered her jewelry box had been rummaged through. The victim suspected the burglar was an ex-boyfriend. The woman's landlord said her trusted and long time plumber reported the man had come into the victim's residence when he was working.

The woman and her ex were together for several years and she told police he'd given her the Rolex three years ago. On Wednesday, November 11, 2009, the man was arrested for criminal threats and police said he had a loaded handgun inside his home. The woman obtained an emergency protective order because she was in fear of her safety and later obtained a restraining order, which her ex has not yet been served with.

Furthermore, in a three day span leading up to when the woman's property was stolen, her ex reportedly called her at least three times, texted her six times and left her a voicemail.

DIRTY CALLS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

A resident went to the police station to report that somebody has made about 90 harassing phone calls to her over the last month. The woman says she began receiving 3-6 calls a day from about 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to her cell phone beginning on Thursday, October 22. Her caller ID identifies the man as "Jamaica," and the victim has told the suspect to stop calling her. The man speaks in either a Middle Eastern or Jamaican accent, doesn't identify himself and asks for a Benecia. The victim will explain to the man he has the wrong number, only to hear him make comments of a graphic sexual nature. She does not think the man knows who she is or where she lives, but says that as a realtor, the phone calls have a negative impact on her business.

Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

