

Published November 1st, 2017

Acalanes outlasts Campolindo, 35-28

By Jon Kingdon



Photos Gint Federas

Playing in front of a sold-out, homecoming crowd, Acalanes quarterback Robbie Rowell scored the winning touchdown late in the game, running the ball in from 3 yards out in a game that will be long remembered by the Acalanes faithful. Campolindo head coach Kevin Macy could not remember going into a bigger game against Acalanes over his career and he proved prescient.

Campolindo came out and dominated Acalanes from the start behind quarterback John Torchio and running back Shaun Ishida. Ishida, converted several first downs, rushing 26 times for 167 yards and one touchdown, allowing the Cougars to dominate in time of possession as they jumped out to a 14-0 lead. Campolindo controlled the ball for 29:40 minutes to 18:14 for Acalanes.

Acalanes began the game with a series of misplays - penalties and inaccurate and dropped passes. Quarterback Robbie Rowell did not allow his team to lose their focus: "We came out and played nervous. Yet we knew that we could come back."

Acalanes coach Floyd Burnsed echoed Rowell's analysis: "We were too hyped up at the start of the game. I told the team to settle down and play our game."

Uncharacteristically, Rowell won the game more with his legs than his arm, rushing 16 times for 181 yards, many of these runs coming after not finding an open receiver. Acalanes ran for a composite 258 yards. Still Rowell completed 17 of 24 passes for 215 yards and three touchdowns, tying the game at 14-14 with a 34-yard run late in the first half, which would prove to be a portent of things to come.

Burnsed saw his quarterback take what was given to him: "Campolindo dropped their defenders into coverage, which forced Rowell to run after dropping back to pass and he had a lot of room to run."

Torchio completed 18 of 31 passes for 217 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 58 yards. Besides playing quarterback, Torchio played free safety, making several big hits and had an interception as well. However, it was an interception thrown by Torchio late in the first half that would come back to haunt the Cougars. On the Acalanes 2-yard line with 31 seconds left in the first half, Torchio tried to force a pass into coverage and was intercepted by Bryan Merken (who also had four receptions and two touchdowns).

The second half became the shootout that had been anticipated between Rowell and Torchio. The teams alternated scoring touchdowns, starting with a Rowell to Chris Rogers from 3 yards out. After Ishhida ran for a 30-yard touchdown, Rowell hit Merken for a 24-yard touchdown. Torchio then led Campolindo on a six-minute drive to tie the game on a 6-yard pass to Vincent Mossotti.

Acalanes began their final drive with 2:35 left in the game. Passing and running the ball, Rowell led the Dons to the Campolindo 3-yard line. Taking the ball himself around the right side, Rowell barely crossed the goal line to score the winning touchdown with 6.7 seconds left in the game.

Still the game was not over. After an Acalanes kickoff that went out of bounds, Campolindo took over on their 35-yard line. On the last play of the game, Torchio scrambled to the 50-yard line and as he was being forced out of bounds he threw the ball across the field where Parker Windatt, behind a wall of blockers, made it down to the Acalanes 19-yard line before being tackled. A sea of blue then enveloped the field as the Acalanes fans charged onto the field, emptying the stands in celebration of their first win over Campolindo in eight years, improving their record to 7-1. Campolindo's record now stands at 6-3.

Acalanes closes the regular season Nov. 3 against Miramonte. Campolindo concludes their regular season against Clayton Valley.

The game was played with only four game officials as one of the officials was injured in the earlier JV game.

Friday's rush onto field reminiscent of "The Play"

By Jon Kingdon

Covering the Campolindo-Acalanes game the other night brought me back to the Stanford-Cal "band on the field" game from 35 years ago. I was scouting for the Oakland Raiders at that time and was sitting in the stands with my friend Scott Righthand. People never remember a key mistake committed by Stanford at the end of the game; quarterback John Elway called timeout with about 10 seconds to go in the game to set up the field goal. I said to Scott that he should have waited to call timeout because if they make the field goal they will still have to kick off to Cal.

As everyone has seen numerous times, the insanity of that kickoff ensued with Cal scoring the touchdown and the band running out on the field. After the touchdown, the officials met for what seemed like an eternity and the stands were deathly silent. When the umpire signaled touchdown, the stadium exploded with an amazing cacophony of cheers.

That Campolindo's quarterback John Torchio's father played for Cal and was at that game is more than a little ironic. As for the final play at the game on Friday, Torchio's throw across the field from the right to the left, throwing across his body to give Campolindo a final chance to score should not be overlooked.

I'd like to know if anyone besides Torchio's father and I can claim to have attended both of these memorable games.



John Torchio

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