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Burnsed opens third season with Acalanes football

By John T. Miller



Floyd Burnsed and Nick Kresnak Photo John T. Miller

When Solano Community College dropped its football program in 2012, and then offered a generous buyout and bonus to retiring teachers in 2016, it looked like the end of a distinguished career for head football coach Floyd Burnsed.

Instead, Burnsed saw that Acalanes was looking for a head football coach with the resignation of Mike Ivankovich and decided to apply for the job.

Now in his third year with the Dons, Burnsed is head of a thriving program and is excited to begin the season. "The program is healthy and we have a real good turnout," he says. "The administration is supportive and sees the value of athletics."

championships and an overall record of 154-62-2, before taking on the job of rebuilding the Solano program.

He was named Contra Costa County Coach of the Year three times, 1983 Champion Coach of the Year, the San Francisco 49ers 1996 Coach of the Year, and the North Coast Section Coach of the Year in 2000. At Solano he led the team to three Bay Valley Conference championships and four bowl games before the program was discontinued. He was named California Community College Coach of the Year in 2010.

After going 4-7 his first season, the Dons rode the arm of Robby Rowell, now at UC Berkeley, to a 9-2 record, losing in the North Coast Section quarterfinals to Bishop O'Dowd.

At 71 years old, Burnsed says he'll keep coaching "as long as it's fun. It helps to have the manpower and assistants to help carry out the program." It also helps that he can devote all of his time to the program, since he no longer teaches P.E.

His staff is virtually handpicked and consists of some talented personnel. David Ortega, the defensive coordinator and linebacker coach is Cal's all-time leading tackler; Mark Vicencio (defensive backs and special teams coordinator) and Kurt Piper (wide receivers) played for him on Miramonte's NCS championship team in 1983; and Bryce and Roman Hawthorne (defensive line and running backs) played for Burnsed at Solano. Rounding out the coaching staff is Adam Schneider (offensive line), a former Clayton Valley and Diablo Valley College standout.

Burnsed sees many changes in the game over the years. "It used to be more run oriented. Now with the spread offense, it's more 1-on-1, rather than 11-on-11. Football is more of a cerebral game. Teams that can execute well can be more successful than teams with superior talent." He adds that a good quarterback must be extremely intelligent and looks forward to developing his current QB, Nick Kresnick, a junior this year.

With concussions being a major concern, the method of tackling has changed dramatically. "We use to teach players to tackle with their head straight on. Now most teams are following the Seattle Seahawks technique, with the head behind the ball carrier."

One problem he sees is the decline of participation in the sport. While the Acalanes program has over 40 students on the freshman team, many schools are having to collapse their freshman teams and cancel games. Only three of the 13 schools in the Diablo Athletic League have Frosh programs, making it difficult to find games.

What gives Burnsed the most joy is the development of the players. "It's great to see them go on and be successful," he says. "I still get tons of calls from former players. We're just like teachers like that, but our classrooms are out here on the field."

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[back](#)

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