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Second Half Propels Dons to Victory

By Alex Crook

On Friday, September 19, the 1-1 Acalanes Dons played host to the 0-1 Saint Mary's Panthers of Berkeley for the Dons' third game of the season.

The first quarter was highlighted by the Panthers' senior running back Jordan Wilder. Wilder broke through the Acalanes defense for a couple of nice runs, but other than that, not much happened in the opening 12 minutes, which ended scoreless.

Fifty-five seconds into the second quarter, the Dons were faced with a tough situation. Backed up deep in their territory, punter Nick Manning was forced to work from his own end zone. The ball sailed through Manning's hands over his head, where it was recovered out of the end zone for a Saint Mary's safety.

The Panthers brought the ensuing safety kick back with a strong return to the Acalanes 40 yard line. But Dons defensive end Mat Lewis came up with a sack, forcing the Panthers to punt it away. And with that, the first half ended 2-0 Panthers.

A line drive kick by Millie Triano to start the third quarter shot straight into the arms of Acalanes wide receiver and cornerback Jesse Weiner, who took it to the Dons' 45. Following a 19 yard run to the Saint Mary's 12 just 59 seconds in, Dons QB Tyler Caldwell connected with running back Tyler Malley for 12 yards, putting the Dons up 7-2.

Late in the third when the Dons were faced with a third and long, Manning called a trick play and nearly ran for a Don first down, but was stopped just short of the marker. The third quarter ended 7-2 in favor of Acalanes.

Malley exploded up the middle of the field 1:31 into the fourth for an 89-yard touchdown run to extend the home team's lead to 14-2.

After an Acalanes punt, Saint Mary's took control and began marching down field.

Following a perfect 36-yard hook-up, the Panthers capitalized yet again with a 25-yard lob down to Acalanes' 5. Wilder punched it in from the 1, cutting the lead to 14-9.

Triano's onside kick was fielded by Acalanes at their own 49. Saint Mary's used their last time out with 46 seconds left, Caldwell only had to kneel twice, and Acalanes won the game 14-9.

The win pushes the Dons over the .500 mark, sending them to 2-1. Saint Mary's has yet to be victorious this season, falling to 0-2 on the year.

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