



No real loser in Colts-Cougars clash

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WHAT A game!

In case you were one of the few that missed it, the James Logan High football team beat Newark Memorial on Friday night, 22-14, to claim a second straight Mission Valley Athletic League title.

Both teams went in with 9-0 records and 5-0 league marks. The Colts entered as the No. 2 team in the East Bay Poll, and Newark was No. 4.

It was an MVAL game for the ages. Comcast SportsNet aired the game live — which made for a longer game and less time to make deadline, and they said the crowd was 6,000 people.

The game reminded The Mustard of what football used to be like in the MVAL, full stadiums, lots of enthusiasm and great games. It was nice for the folks outside the Tri-City area to get a glimpse of two quality MVAL football teams.

Newark may have lost the game, but The Mustard doesn't consider it a loser. Let's call it a bump in the road of the 2007 season. Not too many gave the Cougars a chance to win the game, and in fact, they had several chances to at least be in a position to win. Remember, the game was played on that AstroTurf at Logan, where the Colts seem to be a few miles per hour faster.

"You have to give our kids credit, they played their cans off," Newark coach Rich Swift said after the game. "They didn't quit and battled all the way."

The Cougars will not face a tougher team than Logan in the North Coast Section 3-A East Bay playoffs, not even close. The key for the Cougars is to not dwell on the Logan loss, but to use it as a tool to go deep into the playoffs.

Costly turnovers in the first half led to 14 Logan points. And Logan coach George Zuber stuck with his game plan from the beginning — pound the ball on the ground.

After the game, the Logan players celebrated with fans and family on the field. They were elated, and rightfully so. The Colts had just completed a perfect regular season (10-0) — their first since 1996.

But after the game, Zuber put it in perspective.

"We were lucky to come out with a win," Zuber said.

Logan had a 21-7 lead and couldn't put the Cougars away. The Colts had a golden opportunity in the third quarter on a second-and-goal from the 10, but running back Joe Bailey had the ball stripped by Greg O'Connor. Though Newark punted four plays later.

Logan also had a chance to add to its lead with less than a minute to go in the third quarter. On a fourth-and-1 from the 12, Logan was tabbed for a delay of game. That made it fourth-and-6 from the 17, and kicker Jorge Hernandez missed a 34-yard field-goal attempt.

Overall, it was two good teams battling to the end. Kudos to Newark and Logan for putting on a good show.

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NEWARK GETS SNUBBED: Newark was rewarded for a 9-1 season by earning the No.2 seed in the NCS 3-A East Bay playoffs.

What a bunch of hogwash.

The Cougars should have been the top seed, which instead went to San Ramon Valley (8-1-1). This is another case of the NCS seeding and at-large committee not paying attention.

Newark and SRV didn't play each other this year, but have a common opponent in Washington. SRV and Washington tied 35-35 in Week 3. And the next week, Newark beat Washington 6-3. SRV's only loss came to Monte Vista (20-14), the same Monte Vista team that Logan destroyed to open the season, 37-21.

"The fact that we beat Washington and lost to Logan didn't carry much weight," Swift said.

That's what happens when you get a three-member committee picking things they have no idea about.

Still, when it comes to the playoffs, you can't dwell on your seed — you have to beat the best to be the best.

And for the Cougars, that starts with No.7 Washington (4-5-1) at home Friday night at 7.

TRIFECTA: Is it just The Mustard or are we seeing too many MVAL matchups in the first round of NCS?

It happened in girls water polo when Mission San Jose squared off against Washington in the first round.

On Sunday, there were two NCS seeding and at-large meetings at Las Lomas High — girls volleyball

as well as football.

Let's start with the volleyball. Washington earned the No.7 seed (despite a 26-5 record) and will host No.10 Logan (16-14) tonight at 7. It will be the third time the two face each other in the past 12 days and the fourth this year.

Over in the football meeting, No.2 Newark will host No.7 Washington — for the second time this year.

"It is what it is," Swift said. "We're playing Washington, and that's what it is."

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