

Del Norte Notebook ...

September 25, 2019



Streak ends -- Del Norte is now 4-1 this season after losing to Mazama High in Klamath Falls on Sept. 20. The final was 21-14, the third time in four years the Warriors have fallen to the Vikings.

It was over when -- On fourth and goal from the Mazama 9-yard line, trailing by seven with less than 10 seconds to play, quarterback O.J. Calleja's fade pass to Kaleb Price sailed just a hint out of bounds, landing on the turf and effectively ending the game.

Next up -- Del Norte entertains Fortuna on Friday in a non-conference game between the two teams. It will be homecoming night at Mike Whalen Field, with kickoff slated for 7:30 p.m. The two teams will meet again Oct. 25 in Fortuna in a Big Four Conference contest.

Tough loss -- Mazama has won its Skyline League title six years in a row, and over the past five seasons claimed victory in 44 of its 54 games. The Vikings are now 3-0 this season.

Drop in rankings -- Del Norte slipped to No. 3 in the MaxPreps North Coast Section Division 5 rankings, with Encinal staying at No. 1, and De Anza moving up to second place. Eureka comes in at No. 5 and Fortuna No. 9 in the 17-team division. With its win, Mazama moved up to No. 2 in the OSAA Class 4A rankings.

One dimensional -- Mazama ran 41 plays from scrimmage; all but one was a rush. The Vikings' only pass was a trick play, where the running back took a pitch, then threw it back to the quarterback for a first down early in the game. Half of Mazama's plays were inside runs by 220-pound bruiser Charlie Baker.

The other side -- Leading Del Norte in rushing was 165-pound Geo Gonzalez, who had 69 yards on just seven carries, including a 22-yard touchdown sprint, his first of the season.

Turnover troubles -- For the first time this season, Del Norte committed turnovers, losing a fumble and an interception (which was bobbled by the wide receiver). Del Norte did force a fumble in return, giving the Warriors a plus-six in turnover margin.

A passing glance -- By his own admission, it wasn't quarterback O.J. Calleja's best game. The senior doesn't deserve the blame for the interception, but he undoubtedly isn't happy with hitting just three of nine passes for a mere 18 yards. He came into the game connecting on 66% of his passes and averaging 88 yards per game. Expect a bounce-back game this week.

Adams-Lee perfect -- Senior placekicker Kenji Adams-Lee is now an astounding 19-of-19 on extra points this season, and in the right situation could be used on a field-goal attempt of 35-yards plus.

Familiar foe -- Del Norte has played Fortuna more times over the past 15 years than another other opponent, with the Huskies winning 18 and the Warriors 15. In 2018, the teams played three times: Fortuna won the non-conference contest 62-32 in the Friendly City. Del Norte claimed the conference battle at Mike Whalen Field 49-42. Fortuna won the rubber match in the semifinals of the N-C-S playoffs, 30-8, in Crescent City.

Homecoming time -- The return of the yearly homecoming parade through downtown Crescent City is set. The event will begin at about 1:30 p.m. Friday, starting at the Del Norte Historical Society. Local businesses are urged to put up posters or other signs of support for the Warriors. Fans are asked to be on the sidewalks to support not only the football team, but all of the Warrior fall athletes.

JV slips -- Too many turnovers proved to be fatal for the Del Norte High School junior varsity squad, as the Warriors lost to Mazama last Friday 26-8. Hunter Giddings scored Del Norte's lone touchdown. The Warriors are now 3-1 this season.