

Eureka is big game Friday for Warriors ... and the White family, for that matter

October 30, 2019



Two teams with plenty to play for collide Friday night, as Del Norte takes on rival Eureka in the final regular-season high school football game for both teams.

It may also determine who symbolically has to sit at the kiddie table during the White Family Thanksgiving. More on that shortly.

For Del Norte, a victory would mean:

- An unblemished Big Four Conference record and an undisputed championship, its first title since 2016.
- Probable home games in the opening round and the semifinals of the North Coast Section Division 5 playoffs.
- A grand way to send out the dozen or so seniors on the Warriors' roster, who will be honored prior to kickoff.

For Eureka, a win would mean:

- A spot in the North Coast Section playoffs, despite having a losing record in both conference games and overall this season. (That's possible because Eureka played a difficult non-league schedule. If it beats Del

Norte, the Loggers' record against other Division 5 teams will be 1-1, which qualifies them for the post season.)

-- A chance to lift what has been a difficult season for the rebuilding Loggers. In the previous two years, Eureka went 20-0 in regular season games.

-- Bragging rights for the rest of the school year.

It will also be the battle of brothers, as Eureka coach Jason White squares off against his kid brothers ... Del Norte coach Nick White, and Warrior offensive coordinator Chris White.

Earlier this season, the first-year Warrior head coach said he had learned much about running a program from his highly successful big brother, who has won championships at both Eureka and at St. Bernard's High. Del Norte and Eureka even held a pre-season scrimmage together.

However, odds are this week's game plans, defensive schemes and offensive formations are not going to be topics open for discussion between the brothers.

Instead, Eureka will be focused on stopping Del Norte's potent ground attack, which is averaging more than seven yards per carry, led by 1,000-yard rusher Levi Cox-Cooley and supported by five others averaging better than five yards a carry.

The Loggers will also have to figure out how to penetrate Del Norte's stout defense, which limited Fortuna on Friday to just three yards per play in last Friday's 20-7 victory. The Warriors are giving up less than 10 points per game in 2019.

Eureka is coming off a 21-13 loss at St. Bernard's Saturday. The Loggers are dealing with a multitude of injuries to key players. At one point against the Crusaders, Eureka was playing its third-string quarterback. Also out is Chase Steubing, one of the top linebackers in the conference.

Despite the hardships, Eureka is always a tough opponent. This is the team that has won the conference crown in 10 of the past 18 seasons, and has been the home of several future college and NFL stars, including Rey Malualuga (USC, Cincinnati Bengals), Maurice Purify (University of Nebraska, Cincinnati), and current Oregon Ducks starting center Jake Hanson.

On Sunday, North Coast Section officials will select and seed this year's playoff teams. Del Norte is currently No. 2, according to MaxPreps. This season, just eight teams will advance to the post-season out of the 17 teams in Division 5.

Last season, the Warriors reached the semifinals before being bested by eventual section champion Fortuna. Del Norte also made the semifinals in 2013.

Kickoff on Friday is set for 7:30 p.m. at Mike Whalen Field on the Warriors campus. The Warrior Pregame Show on KPOD 97.9 FM is on tap for 7:15 p.m.

Del Norte's junior varsity will wrap up its season against the Loggers. That game begins at 5 o'clock. The Warriors have lost just once on the field this season.

Don't miss the Triplicate's online Friday post-game analysis at www.triplicate.com.