



The last team standing: Hoopa Valley's defense too much for Tomales as Warriors win NCS D5 football title

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Neil Tarpey/The Times-Standard

ARCATA -- The biggest play of Hoopa Valley's 13-0 win in the North Coast Section Division 5 championship game epitomized the team's entire season.

When the Warriors' Shane Nixon grabbed a Tomales fumble and sprinted 36 yards untouched for a first-quarter touchdown, the defense showed why it is the heart of the champions.

"Our defense won the championship tonight," said Hoopa Valley head coach Marty Wilkes, whose team captured its first NCS football crown and finished 11-1.

But to hear Nixon, a talented senior safety, describe the play, his touchdown was business as usual, rather than heroic.

"I saw the ball pop out of the pile, and I scooped and scored," said Nixon.

Scooped and scored.

"You don't know how many times this week we

talked about 'scoop and score,'" said Hoopa Valley's defensive coordinator Dusty Rossman. "What a great group of kids. They made us look good."

Rossman's defensive unit blanked both of its opponents in the D-5 playoffs and recorded four shutouts this season.

"I'm so glad he's my wingman," Wilkes said about Rossman.

The Warriors' D limited Tomales to five first downs and 112 yards on the ground. Almost half of those yards -- 53-- came late in the fourth quarter on Logan Calvi's 37-yard run and John Dalmolin's 16-yard scamper on a fake punt.

Hoopa's defensive strength in the middle of the line, and its speed

on the outside, combined to hold Tomales' junior running back Michael Guerrero -- who entered the game with 1,447 rushing yards -- to 43 yards on 16 carries.

When Braves quarterback Javier Isais dropped back to pass, Hoopa chased him, sacking his twice, but contained instead of overpursuing.

For example, on one play Isais dropped back, set up a screen play and tossed to Calvi, who was tackled immediately for a six-yard loss by Hoopa's Kyle Brown.

Hoopa cornerback Talon Williams picked off a pass and made an excellent tackle on Tomales' punt returner in the second quarter.

Warrior Junior Daniel McKinnon forced two fumbles, including the one that Nixon took to the house.

"They have a very aggressive defense," said Tomales



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head coach Leon Feliciano after the game. "We just couldn't get enough yards on first down to execute our toss offense."

Hoopas offense effectively ran the ball when it needed to, and generated a scoring drive in the second quarter.

Senior Rodney McKinnon carried the ball 19 times for 73 yards, including a two-yard touchdown run with only 48 seconds left in the opening half.

On the touchdown drive, the two key plays were a Tomales 15-yard facemask penalty and quarterback Sonny Ryles 27-yard pass to Nixon that gave the cardinal-and-white a 1st-and-goal opportunity at the Braves' 8-yard line.

Hoopas senior Merk Robbins gained 36 yards, and several key first downs, with his speedy bursts while Nixon rushed 10 times for 43 yards.

"I'm so proud of our kids, they worked hard all year," said Wilkes.

North Coast Section Division 5

Saturday's Box:

at Humboldt State University

Hoopas Valley 13, Tomales 0

Hoopas7600--13

Tomales0000-- 0

Scoring summary

First quarter

5:44 S. Nixon, 36-yard fumble return (B. Hostler

kick) 7-0

Second quarter

0:48 R. McKinnon, 2 -yard run (kick fails)

Team statsHoopasTomales

Total yards215140

Rushes-yds.54-18831-112

Passing yds.2728

Comp-att-int1-6-13-6-1

First downs145

Punts24

Fumbles-lost1-15-3

Penalties2-155-40

Sacks by22

Individual stats

Rushing-- (Hoopas) Robbins 10-36; Ryles 11-21; McKinnon 19-73; Nixon 10-43; McCovey 4-15 (Tomales) Guerrero 16-43; Calvi 4-48; Caramagno 3-10; Isais 4 (-9) Dalmolin 1-16

Passing -- (Hoopas) Ryles 1-6-1, 27 yds (Tomales) Isais 2-5-1, 3 yds.; Caramagno 1-1-0, 25 yds.

Receiving -- (Hoopas) Nixon 1-27 (Tomales) Becerra 1-9; Guerrero 1-25; Calvi 1-(-6)