

Bishop Diego's Title Dreams Broken in OT

By Jon Lee

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A late Santa Clara surge again left Bishop Diego's dreams of football conquest inches short in Saturday's Mid-Valley Division CIF title game. The Cardinals ended a magical season with the 20-14 loss.

The Saints took the lead on a contested fourth-down, one-yard dive in overtime, that took over a minute to clarify, as the hearts of Bishop fans raced and then broke. Santa Clara held tough on defense when Bishop got its shot to score to claim the title. Christian Winnewisser's fourth-down pass to Jeremy Kjar was bobbled and then stripped loose in the end zone.

Winnewisser had used his strong arm to notch four touchdowns in the Cardinals' 42-41, last-minute loss in the two teams' October matchup. But Saturday, a stubborn Santa Clara crew held him to six of 14 passing and only 26 yards.

Bishop's two touchdowns came on spectacular runs of 24 and 74 yards by Aaron Skinner, who carried the ball 14 times for 122 yards. But in the second half the Saints stiffened and shut down both Skinner and Winnewisser with toughness in the trenches. In OT, Santa Clara sacked Winnewisser three times before that game-saving strike attempt to Kjar almost rewrote the result.

Bishop's defense was no less stubborn, holding Santa Clara's spectacular senior running back, Cierre Wood, in check for most of the night. No small task against Wood who averaged 16 yards a carry coming into the game. He hauled the ball 29 times Saturday for 196 yards, including a seven-yard scoring dash to tie the game with 1:38 left in regulation.

Head coach Tom Crawford, the Cardinals players, and their faithful fans have had a season full of proud moments, with a CIF run that was one call — on a pileup at the goal line — away from Cinderella-esque. Whatever the game films show today, it should be the consistent magic of this storybook team that they all remember as the clock strikes 12.