

Lacey clinches Class B South title

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BERKELEY — With Lacey holding a slim 7-6 lead over Central Regional in the opening minutes of the second quarter, senior lineman Dave Vieira provided the spark the Lions needed.

Vieira blocked a Jonathan Azaceta punt and returned it 46 yards for a touchdown to make the score 14-6 and spur Lacey to a 42-6 win over Central on Friday night. With the win, Lacey clinched the outright Class B South division title.

"It's something that you dream about as a lineman," Vieira said. "Seeing a fumble scooping it up and scoring. It does not get any better than that as a lineman."

This is not the first time that Vieira has scored a touchdown as last year against Middletown North he returned a fumble for a touchdown.

"It's a great feeling," Vieira said. "Lineman don't get to it very often and when we do it's a really big deal."

Senior running back Jake Dabal said Vieira's touchdown gave Lacey a shot in the arm.

"It was a great play," Dabal said. "That play shifted the momentum of the game. He is a great player. He is one of the fastest guys on our team and one of the best lineman around. He's a beast."

Dabal said Vieira has been making plays like that since they were in Pop Warner together. Dabal finished the day with 58 yards on five carries and two touchdowns.

"He has always been that type of player," Dabal said. "On offense he led me into the end zone on one of my touchdowns."

Senior quarterback Craig Cicardo said it was special to win the division title.

"It's great," Cicardo said. "It's the first time in four years that we have won the division and do to it here is great."

Cicardo finished the day with 135 yards passing and three touchdowns.

"On offense we did a good job," Cicardo said. "I thought that we dominated on both sides of the ball today."

This game marks the first time the rivalry has not been played on Thanksgiving Day. Lacey has a 22-7 lead in rivalry including its win over Central in the 1993 NJSIAA Group III semifinals.

"It's weird not playing them around Thanksgiving," Cicardo said. "Despite the change, they are always a rival."