

Lions get revenge against Chargers

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Lacey's Zach Torrell (8) tries to avoid the tackle of Winslow Township's Calvin Lowe during. (STAFF PHOTO: KEITH J. WOODS)

LACEY — Just when it appeared Lacey's offense again would struggle against Timber Creek in the NJSIAA playoffs, the Lions needed about 30 seconds to spring to life.

Cameron Blackwell caught a go-ahead 14-yard touchdown pass late in the first half and the top-seeded Lions went on to defeat the No. 8 Chargers, 27-6, in a South Jersey Group III quarterfinal Saturday at Lacey High School.

Lacey (10-0), the No. 1 team in the Asbury Park Press top 10, will play No. 4 Winslow Township in an SJ III semifinal on Saturday.

Last year, Timber Creek (5-4) beat Lacey, 13-2, in a SJ III semifinal. For most of the first half in the rematch, Lacey did not fare much better with just 12 yards and one first down.

Timber Creek, meanwhile, was poised to take a 6-3 lead into halftime after Damiere Byrd scored on a 1-yard touchdown dive with 35.2 seconds remaining in the second quarter.

Lacey, though, immediately struck back when Jarrod Molzon hauled in a 48-yard pass from quarterback Craig Cicardo to the Chargers 14. One play later, Cicardo threaded a 14-yard touchdown pass to Blackwell as the Lions took a 10-7 lead with 5.9 seconds left before halftime.

"We had nothing really going," Blackwell said. "That was like the spark that lit the fire."

Lacey then took control early in the third quarter when a Lions punt bounced off a Chargers player and Lacey sophomore Kyle Spatz recovered the ball at the Timber Creek 8. Molzon followed with an 8-yard touchdown run and the Lions upped the lead to 17-6.

"That was a big break," Lacey coach Lou Vircillo said, "but you create your own situations and our defense and our special teams have been doing that all year."

Lacey quickly seized on another turnover when linebacker Tony Pierce recovered a Chargers fumble at the Timber Creek 36, setting up Molzon's 28-yard field goal to make it 20-6.

Molzon, who kicked a 45-yard field goal in the second quarter, added a 24-yard touchdown run midway through the fourth quarter to give Lacey a 27-6 lead.

Lacey's defense was solid the entire game, holding the South Carolina-bound Byrd to just 45 yards on offense. Pierce and lineman Dave Vieira each had two sacks to lead the Lions.

"We wanted to make sure we didn't give them the outside edge because (Byrd) has a lot of perimeter speed," Vieira said. "We wanted to keep him contained and we tried to put as much pressure on the quarterback as possible so he couldn't get an easy read."

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