

Tony Pierce, Zach Torrell make presence felt for Lacey football team



Lacey safety Zach Torrell (left) and linebacker Tony Pierce are shown at practice on Tuesday.
(STAFF PHOTO: MARY FRANK)

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Tony Pierce is soft spoken. Zach Torrell missed the last half of last season with a knee injury.

Last Saturday, in Lacey's game against Toms River East, Pierce was heard from loud and clear and Torrell put a hurt on the Raiders' passing game as the Lions recorded a 27-0 win for their third shutout of the season.

Pierce, a senior outside linebacker, was in on nine tackles, had five quarterback pressures and a sack.

Torrell, a senior safety, had an interception which set up Lacey's second touchdown, caused a fumble, broke up a pass in the end zone, knocked down another pass and made four tackles.

Lacey coach Lou Vircillo said Pierce, a two-year starter, had not "stood out" during the first five games of the season.

"He's always very concerned about making mistakes because of that sometimes he doesn't allow himself to play naturally," Vircillo said. "This particular game fit his style of play because a lot of the activity was happening outside.

"They were trying to overload one side or the other or motion one side or the other. We emphasized that during the week and he understood that real well."

Toms River East tries to get to the perimeter with junior running back Mario Steriti, who is a threat to go the distance on any play, quarterback Joey Clarizio and running back Mario Steriti.

Steriti was held to just 32 yards on 16 carries. Clarizio rushed for 33 yards on 10 carries and was just 2-for-9 passing for 24 yards. Wasilick had just two yards on four carries.

The Raiders managed just 109 yards rushing on 44 attempts and 133 yards of total offense.

"My assignment was to contain the outside and don't let anybody get to the outside," said Pierce, who is in his second season as a starter.

"Tony forced the edge and didn't let anything get outside of him," said Torrell, who is in his third season as a starter. "When they threw, he was always in the quarterback's face, which helped the secondary out a lot."

Torrell, who has four interceptions this season and had four interceptions last season, said Smith played a key role in his interception.

"Tony did a great job of forcing the quarterback to roll out," Torrell said. "He made him (Clarizio) throw it before he wanted to. The quarterback hung it up a little bit."

Also, making the interception easier to make according to Torrell was that cornerback Jake Dabal played the underneath route, allowing him to make the play by coming over the top.

"It was over the reach of the receiver and then I jumped a little bit higher than him," Torrell said.

"I had to bring the pressure every play," Pierce said.

Lacey (6-0), ranked No. 2 in the Asbury Park Press Top 10 Poll, has allowed just three touchdowns and 20 points on the season. It is the only team to hold Pinelands tailback Matt McLain to under 200 yards. McLain, who has 1,297 yards in five games, had just 79 against Lacey.

The Lions are fourth in the Shore Conference in defense. They are allowing just 75.5 yards a game rushing and 181.3 yards a game in total offense.

"I think we can go a long way," Pierce said.

"Our defensive line is big and fast," Torrell said. "Our linebackers read their keys and are always flying up to the line and our secondary is slowing down receivers. We don't really fall for the play-action that much."

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