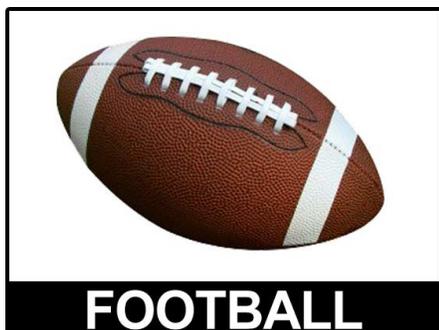




Late TD strike lifts Brethren Christian

By [MICHAEL AMBROSE](#)

2016-10-20 22:24:58



FOOTBALL

IRVINE – With the score tied and less than four minutes left in the game, Joey Gutierrez fired a 41-yard touchdown strike down the sideline to Jason Fuga to give Brethren Christian a 28-21 victory over Crean Lutheran in a nonleague game Thursday at Irvine High.

Fuga had a half-step on the defensive back, but Gutierrez placed the ball where only Fuga could catch it. Brethren Christian has now beaten Crean Lutheran all eight years they have fielded a varsity program.

“Timely wasn’t it?,” said Brethren Christian coach Pat McNally, comparing Gutierrez’s playmaking ability to what he had seen over the summer from his quarterback. “We’ve got great skill people.”

The Saints tied the game on the previous drive, using a reverse pass from Patrick McNerney to Ryan o’Keefe for 31-yards to set up a touchdown pass from Gavin Folsom to McNerney with 5:15 left.

Following the touchdown, Crean Lutheran (6-2) did move the ball into striking distance, but a fourth down interception in the final minute by **Brent Nash Jr.**, his second pick of the game, secured the victory for Brethren Christian (7-1).

O’Keefe also returned an interception for a touchdown in the first quarter.

Brethren Christian’s star running back, **Jordan Leonard**, came into the game in the top five in the county in touchdowns and yards. Leonard was limited to six carries for 2 yards before he left the game with a knee injury late in the first quarter.

Leonard returned for one carry in the second half.

Gutierrez, who also threw touchdowns to Nash and **Joshua Gorell**, was picked off twice after throwing only one interception in the seven games prior.

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