



Albano notes: Crean Lutheran eyes even bigger game

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The euphoria of a breakthrough victory gave way to perspective but also anticipation for Crean Lutheran on Monday.

"We have to remember it's one game," Saints football coach **Brett Mertens** said of his team's stunning, 26-20, victory last week against longtime Academy League power St. Margaret's. "(But) it's fun to have competitive games, meaningful games."

The Saints' victory, which snapped the Tartans' 37-game league winning streak that started in 2004, set up the seventh-year program for an even bigger game Thursday. Crean Lutheran (7-2, 2-0) can capture its first league title with a victory against Brethren Christian (8-1, 1-1) at Ocean

View.

Crean Lutheran used a powerful ground attack from its spread attack to upset St. Margaret's (7-2, 2-1), the defending CIF East Valley champion. Running back **Garrett Cox**, once a freshman at Servite, rushed for 98 yards on a season-high 27 carries. The Saints, who only threw eight passes, also got 86 yards rushing from quarterback **Gavin Folsom**.

The running game allowed the Saints to dominate time of possession and limit the Tartans to six possessions.

"We kept (St. Margaret's standout) **Nick Shanks** on the sideline," said Mertens, 29, who is in his third year as the team's head coach.

Crean Lutheran's depth on the offensive line showed as it replaced one lineman during the game because of injury, rotated three players at right tackle and employed a tight end.

The Saints field varsity and JV teams and feature about 50 players in their program. They have 13 seniors on varsity.

"We're still building," Mertens said. "It's (been) a natural progress."

JSERRA ADJUSTS

OCVarsity Gridiron Week 10: ...



Desperate times call for adjustments.

That's how JSerra viewed its Trinity League game against Mater Dei last week.

The Lions were 0-3 in the league and needed a victory against the county's top-ranked team to keep their playoff hopes alive.

"We had to try to do something different," JSerra coach **Jim Hartigan** said.

The Lions made most of their changes on defense, and for the most part, hit the jackpot. Players switched positions and blitzed more as the Lions upset the Monarchs, 35-28.

Avery Williams moved to cornerback from linebacker and helped slow receiver **AJ Collins** (two catches). Sophomore **Rian Fields** shifted to linebacker from safety and racked up eight tackles and a sack. **Riley O'Brien** played safety instead cornerback and also collected eight tackles.

"Everyone we moved," Hartigan said, "was productive."

Then there was the pressure on Mater Dei freshman quarterback **JT Daniels**. JSerra blitzed more and recorded seven sacks, including 2 1/2 by **Corey Selenski**, who played defensive end and outside linebacker. Linebacker **Kyle Adams** added 1 1/2 sacks.

On offense, JSerra passed the ball more. The combination of O'Brien and **Matthew Robinson** finished with 26 attempts, only three less than the prolific Daniels.

JSerra (6-3, 1-3), tied with Santa Margarita (5-4, 1-3) for fifth in league, plays host to second-place Orange Lutheran (5-4, 2-2) at Saddleback College on Friday.

"If we win, we have a chance (at CIF)," Hartigan said.

NOTES

If JSerra, Santa Margarita (5-4, 1-3) and St. John Bosco (9-0, 4-0) win this week, there could be a five-way tie for second place in the Trinity League. In general, the league uses head-to-head results to break ties when possible and then moves to coin-flips. St. John Bosco athletic director **Monty McDermott** said. ...

Injured receiver **Osiris St. Brown** of Mater Dei (7-2, 2-2) is probable to play Friday against Santa Margarita, Monarchs coach **Bruce Rollinson** said. ...

Standout defensive backs **Keyon Riley** of Servite (unsportsmanlike) and **JP Hackett** of Santa Margarita (helmet-to-helmet hit) were ejected from their games last week. The players' status for this week was unclear Monday. ...

Edison wide receiver **Garrett White**, who suffered a knee injury against Fountain Valley on Friday, was scheduled to undergo an MRI on Monday, Chargers coach **Dave White** said. ...