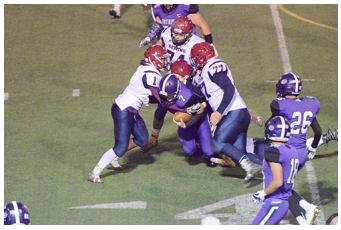
Written by By Bernie Dotson For the Sun
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No. 7 Pats advance to play No. 2 and undefeated Belen

The Miyamura Patriots held off late drives by Deming and beat the Wildcats 49-26 Nov. 10 in a first-round 5A state playoff football game played at Angelo DiPaolo Memorial Stadium.

The Patriots (9-2, 3-2) advanced and will play Belen (10-0, 4-0) on Nov. 18 at 1 pm in a home game for Belen. The Eagles are the sole undefeated team to play the Patriots this year.

“I thought we played well,” Patriots’ head coach Wes Shank said after the game. “In the

playoffs, everybody plays their best game. That's just the way the playoffs are."

Senior quarterback Matt Chavez played superbly, keeping the Patriots ahead after both halves with pinpoint passes and precision running. Chavez was 19-of-25 for 231 yards and carried 16 times for 91 yards with just one interception in the game. That interception came as the second quarter closed, with Miyamura leading 21-7.

Chavez scored in the early part of the third quarter to give the Pats a 28-14 cushion. When the Wildcats came back on a 9-yard touchdown run by junior quarterback Daniel Garcia, the game looked to be up for grabs. But the Miyamura offense was fluid and smooth throughout the entire game and the defense made stops when it mattered.

"I thought the game was played pretty evenly the first half," Deming head coach Greg Simmons said. Deming ended the 2017 with a 6-6 overall record. "Not enough breaks went our way."

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Chavez scored with 6:30 left in the third, but was called out for taunting, which cancelled the touchdown. The ball was subsequently placed at the Wildcats' 8-yard line as a result of the penalty. The left-handed Chavez ultimately found junior wideout Jason Cordova on a slant and the Pats went up 49-26.

Senior A.J. Silva scored early for Miyamura when he beat the Wildcats' secondary for a 31-yard score. Senior wide receiver Giovanni Chioda was instrumental in catching long and short passes from Chavez, and in running a couple of end around plays for Miyamura gains.

Chavez scored six times for the Patriots, who appeared to let up a bit late in the second quarter. A bright spot for the Wildcats on offense was senior Ryan Larko, who scored first for Deming but put the Wildcats on the board. Larko later scored on two conversion plays.

Defensively, Chioda and Silva recorded an interception apiece. Senior linebacker Ty Talor recorded eight tackles, two for quarterback losses.

Belen eased by Los Lunas 35-34 on Nov. 4 in the Eagles' last game of the 2017 season. The Eagles averaged 325 rushing yards a game this season and 140 through the air.

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