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### CIF-SS DIVISION 9 QUARTERS | BURROUGHS VS. ST. ANTHONY



CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT  
**Jack Sherritt (20) clears a path for Burroughs rusher Bryson Pippin (6) during the Burros' 43-0 playoff victory over Rubidoux on Nov. 10. The Burros will stay at home and host St. Anthony in the quarterfinals.**

# Burros bring confidence into quarters vs. Saints

**BY CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON**  
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As the playoffs get deeper, so do the Burroughs football team's good fortune.

After a typical short first-round preparation week, the Burros benefited not only from an easy 43-0 contest, but also knowing who their opponent is mere minutes after lining up in victory formation.

The St. Anthony Saints, from Long Beach, are coming to town today in the CIF Southern Section Division 9 quarterfinals.

So, more time to rest, prepare and lick wounds,

and the opportunity to host another postseason game — how do the Burros not allow the playoff fever to get into their heads?

“There’s a difference between confidence and arrogance,” said senior linebacker Brock Mather. “A lot of people confuse arrogance with confidence. We come out with more confidence. We come in prepared, ready to play instead of over our heads. We don’t think this is a walk in the park.”

So, confidence was in full swing during Thursday’s practice, as the Burros went over everything - offense, defense, special teams - in full detail.

The last time the Burros were in the quarterfinals

was in 2015 when they had to the Coachella Valley - La Quinta, to be exact - in the final year under the Eastern Division playoff format. Quarterback Austin Griffin, then a sophomore, was filled with energy prior to the contest, fidgeting on the bench before kickoff.

Now, two years older and much more reserved, the senior said that he is even more excited for this year’s quarterfinals.

“I’m ready for this game,” Griffin said. “I’m excited. It’s revenge for getting taken out in the second round of sophomore year.”

Burroughs head coach Todd Mather, who was an assistant coach during the Burros’ historic 2005 cham-

pionship run, also spoke highly of this year’s postseason picture, saying that it’s the group of kids and the aforementioned strokes of adversity and favor that is making the run memorable.

“I know the kids we have,” he said. “The community has been excited about Burroughs football. Mostly because of our play and because the group of kids we have. It’s no secret. This is our most legitimate shot. It’s the best shot we had because of the team.”

#### Scouting the Saints

The Saints are the defending Division 10 champions, knocking off San

# Desert Classic set for Saturday at Cerro Coso College

#### SPECIAL TO THE DI

The Ridgecrest Desert Classic is taking place on Saturday, Nov. 18 with the Classic Loop and Beginner racers leaving the Cerro Coso Community College parking lot at 9:30 a.m., and the Sport and Expert/Pro classes taking off at 10:15 a.m. Race lengths are approximately eight miles for the Classic course, 14 for Beginner, 21 for Sport, and 27 for the Expert/Pro course.

Registration is available at [www.highsierracyclists.club](http://www.highsierracyclists.club) under the RDC tab, and the current race roster can be viewed from the same location. This will be the sixth year High Sierra Cyclists has sponsored the event and is experiencing record-breaking registration with 140 racers.

Local club members Arjuna Flenner, Brent Cornelius, and Will Pease will be representing High Sierra Cyclists Mountain Bike Team this year and should do well in their respective classes, with Flenner in the pro class, and Cornelius and Pease in the Expert 30 to 39 class.

Flenner and Cornelius had successful racing seasons with the Kenda Cup Endurance Series being an excellent representation. This series consists of five races and ranks competitors according to

point accumulation. Flenner placed third on the season in the pro class while Cornelius placed first overall in the men’s 30 to 39 class.

Will Pease placed third overall in the inaugural Tinker Classic at the Spicer Ranch in May. Dirt biker-turned-mountain biker and High Sierra Cyclists club member Colby Begin will also be racing this year and is looking to improve on his already impressive 2016 Expert course time of 2:03:44. Begin competed in an Over the Hump mountain bike series single race in May and placed first in the 40+ sport class.

Dave Spicer, founder of STORM-OV and the subsidiary Trails-OV, will also be in attendance at the 2017 Ridgecrest Desert Classic. He has become a powerful force in the mountain bike community as he works to balance recreation and conservation in his small hometown of Beatty, Nev. Spicer collaborates regularly with local businesses and the BLM, among other entities, to stimulate the local economy while being mindful of the environment. He is currently assisting event director Cimarron Chacon for the second annual Tinker Classic,

SEE CLASSIC, B2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Ron Bell, Andy Couch, and Ron Strand are local cyclists who participate in the Ridgecrest Desert Classic.**

SEE BURROS, B3

### CIFCS 8 MAN SEMIFINALS | TRONA VS. LATON

# After a break, Tornadoes storm into semifinals

**BY CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON**  
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TRONA – Curtis Boutte looked like a fan on the sideline, oohing and aahing whenever he heard the sound of a collision.

It’s Tuesday, and the Trona football team is taking full advantage of its second, and last, day of full-contact practice. The hits are loud as if it was Friday night.

“I love the sound of pads in the morning,” the head coach said, flashing a grin, before heading to the middle of the field.

(Granted, it was 7:00 in the evening.)

It’s mid-November and, for now, Trona is putting a hold on basketball season. There is still work to do at

The Pit.

The Tornadoes begin the playoffs already thrust into the semifinal round of the CIF Central Section 8-Man playoffs. Its opponent, Laton, knocked off Desert to reach the Tornadoes, with the winner heading to the title game.

And, make no mistake, the Sandmen are chomping at the bit. Trona hasn’t played football in three weeks: a battle at home against Mammoth was canceled due to weather, a regular-season-ending bye week, and the first-round playoff bye.

“We’ve been pushing super hard against each other,” Boutte said. “Lining up, making sure the rust is off. Monday and Tuesday, we’re hitting hard. I think my players are tired of looking at each other, ready to hit

another uniform color.”

Quarterback Tyler Boutte dubbed the succession of bye weeks “the worst thing going into playoffs.”

But, “we took advantage of it. We push hard, push each other, and are ready to go in and give Laton a good game.”

Chad Ramos, the energetic running back/middle linebacker, couldn’t contain his excitement. He was jumping around all practice, staying hyped.

“I personally believe our practices alone are really intense,” the senior said. “We’re constantly pushing each other. I think our second-string defense is better than some of the teams we’ve faced.”

#### Strong Sandmen

Going into the playoffs, the Tornadoes have been



CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT  
**Trona quarterback Tyler Boutte drops back to pass during Tuesday night's practice at The Pit. The Tornadoes will enter the semifinals of the CIFCS playoffs tonight.**

on a tear, putting up massive amounts of points without looking back.

It’s nowhere close: from a numerical perspective: in their final two games of the regular season – their two

most recent games – Trona outscored its opponents 115-6. It starts right off the bat, too: in the first half alone, Trona is up 86-0.

“It’s been interesting because the games have been

out of control early,” Curtis Boutte said. “With the addition of Teddy (Johnson) as defensive coordinator, Andy (Ramos) as offensive coordi-

SEE TORNADES, B2



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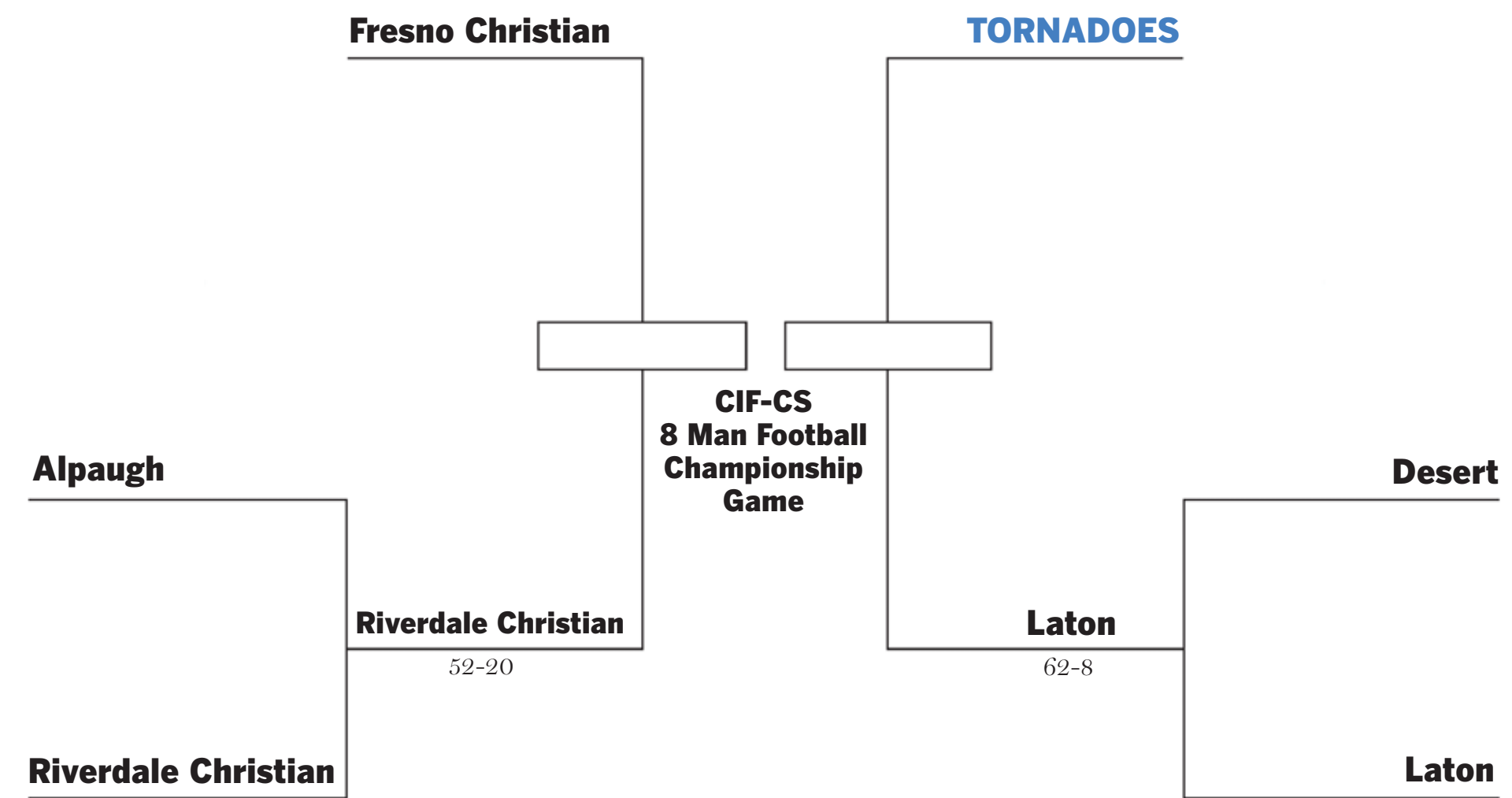
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# CIFCS 8-Man playoff bracket



## TORNADOES

Continued from B1

nator, we've had a lot more coaches, a lot more bonding, and a lot more minds. We didn't think it was gonna be a good year, but putting it all together as a coaching staff, we've done well.

"We take pride in a zero on defense."

Tyler Boutte chalked up the fast start to just that – a fast start.

"We're here to do one thing," he said. "We're quick. we get out moving, and we tire them out. They're not used to it."

### Flip the switch

Whether it has been the coaching, the raw motivation from the players or the atmosphere, Trona has found ways to get motivated before game time.

One method that Tyler Boutte brought up is com-

pletely opposite from anything else, perhaps counterintuitive.

The Sandmen sit in total silence. For 15 minutes, there is no hype, no bouncing around, no dancing, no impassioned speeches.

It's just the players, their preferred music, and meditation.

"We call it, 'Flip the switch,'" the quarterback said. "We're sitting there, stretching out, and just focusing on the game. (At home), it happens in the weight room before the game."

Tyler Boutte admitted that the darkness is a personal preference – "That's how I get hyped up for the game and motivated" – but Chad Ramos also waxed poetic about the quality time.

"I envision my job," he said. "I look at what I have to do. Whether it helps or not, you take those 15 minutes ... take a step back and focus on what you have to

do that night."

### Looking at Laton

The Mustangs finished 8-3 overall, 4-1 in the Central Sierra League, a game behind No. 1 seed Fresno Christian. They have not seen the loss column much, but when they do, it can be big. Two of their three losses have been by margins of nearly 50 points, with the Mustangs only scoring once in each game. They scored twice in their third loss, but their opponent, San Luis Obispo's Mission Prep, still doubled their score.

With the extra time the Tornadoes have had, the coaching staff and few of their players traveled to watch Laton play Desert last week.

"We're very confident going in that we know who their star players are," Curtis Boutte said. "They're a good team, a quick team, but they can run with power. They have a quarterback

who is dynamic. He can run, pass and is a safety (on defense) – a triple threat."

That quarterback, junior Tysen Westfall, has thrown for 1,139 yards in 11 games with 21 touchdowns. He also is the Mustangs' leading rusher, racking up 970 yards on the ground and reaching the end zone 13 times. As a safety, he has a team-high seven interceptions and two recovered fumbles.

Additionally, Laton has a pair of triple-digit running backs: sophomore Hayden Mosher has 585 yards and seven scores, and junior Rigo Jimenez has 126 yards and four touchdowns.

More recently, against Desert, Westfall was passed in short-yardage situations (5-10, 66 yards, two touchdowns), sticking to his ground presence instead to make the statement (five carries, 104 yards, two touchdowns).

### No place like the road

Because the Tornadoes are newcomers to the CIF Central Section this year, they cannot host a playoff game, even if they are the No. 2 seed.

That means they, with the exception of practices, have seen The Pit for the last time and will have to make their statements on grass.

It doesn't matter, the team asserts. The Sandmen have done a little better on the road, in fact. Aside from going 5-0 away from The Pit, Trona has outscored its opponents 61-6 on average. Its only anomaly was Sept. 22's game at Avalon – on Catalina Island – where the Tornadoes had a nail-biting 54-18 victory.

"We've traveled to Avalon, we've traveled to Lucerne, we've done some very long trips to prepare for this," Curtis Boutte said. "We've been very comfortable on the road."

## CLASSIC

Continued from B1

slated for March 31, 2018.

The legendary Tinker Juarez will of course not only be present at the Tinker Classic (60K and 100K), but will also compete at his namesake race. Visit trails-ov.org and tinkerclassic.com for more information.

Derek Hermon, owner of Bear Valley Bikes and founder of Speed Evolution, will be in attendance as well this year. Hermon has achieved an impressive professional mountain bike resume and, like Spicer, has contributed an immense amount of energy and enthusiasm to the mountain bike scene. Hermon has attended every Ridgecrest Desert Classic since its rebirth in 2012 while organizing his own local mountain bike race, the Grizzly 100 (bbvrace.com) which is scheduled for Sept. 29, 2018.

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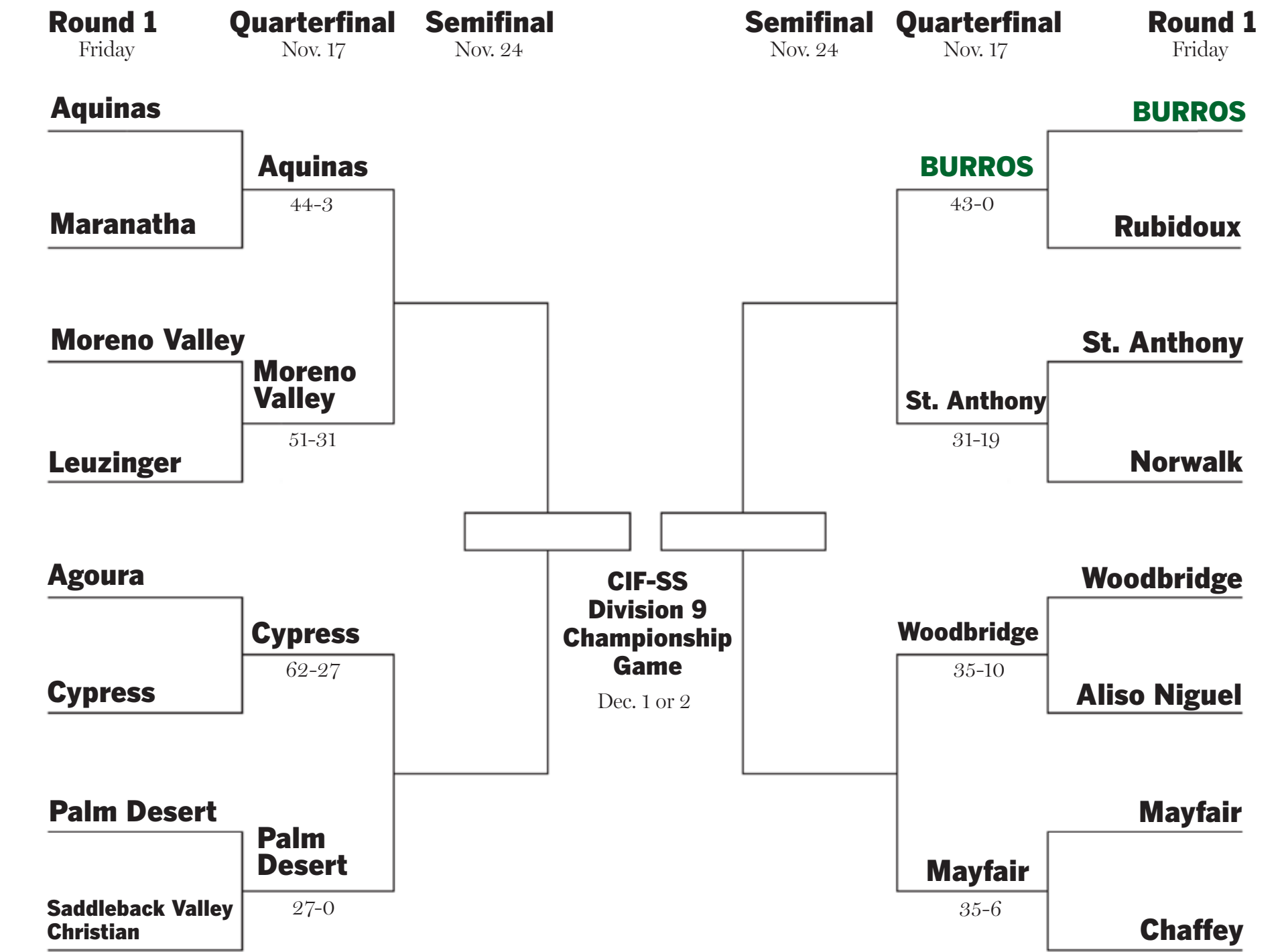
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# CIF-SS Division 9 playoff bracket



## BURROS

Continued from B1

Bernardino Aquinas — the No. 1 seed in this year's Division 9 playoffs — 33-32 in the title game.

It didn't end there. The Saints made as close to the state championship as possible, falling by only one point to Pleasant Valley in the Division 4-A game.

"They're pretty big up front," Griffin said. "The defensive backs are fast. There are some undisciplined kids there, and we'll take advantage of it."

The Saints run a spread offense, bolstered by two

600-plus-yard running backs: juniors Markell Sayles (623, six touchdowns) and Jaylen Jefferson (693, eight touchdowns). Senior Deshaun Harvey is their main signal-caller, completing 59 percent of his passes (68-116) for 1,095 yards, seven touchdowns, and three interceptions.

Harvey has plenty of targets, as well. Five Saints have accounted for triple-digit yards, with senior Santino Venegas (192) leading the charge. However, there have been few aerial trips to the end zone.

Despite that, out of the 11 teams the Burros have faced, the team that St. An-

thony emulates varies, depending on who you ask.

"I think they're more like Rancho Verde," Brock Mather said after conferring with Antonio Ramirez and Bryce Moore, then added that the Burros have yet to face an agile quarterback like Harvey.

What about the head coach?

"Apple Valley," Todd Mather said. "They (the Saints) have a great run game. They're balanced like that. They run most of their stuff out of the spread offense. The quarterback's a great runner."

What's in store?

On offense, the Burros want to counter that with a

balanced approach of their own. The run game continues to pay dividends — thanks to a strong offensive line — so a little bit of this and a little bit of that is to be expected.

"The last four games, we had over 100 rushing yards," Todd Mather said. "It's helped us. We've been successful, and we're gonna keep building on that. The less one-dimensional we are, the more we fool defenses."

It came at a perfect time, considering Griffin is still nursing his shoulder injury. While throwing 40-yard strikes during a session at Thursday's practice, he said that the extra time has

made preparation more of a healing week.

"Lots of film, getting mental reps, working out here," he said.

If the need arises, he will go to his legs; he expects to be mobile.

"I'm feeling good," he said. "I'm trying not to get hit this week, but if I need to, I will. I'm getting out of the pocket this week."

Time is also helping the Burros mentally. Todd Mather noted that the Burros lost some focus after the loss to Apple Valley.

"At that time, their goal was a league championship," he said. "We get into a playoff bracket, they now have a refocus to win

the league title. That has been the biggest turnaround; it's given us new life."

It's something the Burros are not taking for granted. Should the Burros win this round, and Woodbridge knocks off Mayfair, they will host the semifinal round as well.

"They knew what the ultimate goal is," Todd Mather said. "Burroughs hasn't been in this situation for many years. We haven't passed the second round since 2005. That's three full classes, freshman to senior, that has never been past this round. I want them to know, don't let this slip away."

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