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Monte Vista boys lacrosse beats San Ramon Valley for EBAL title

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DANVILLE — Joey Pimobo's hat trick and Joe Tabor's 16 saves secured Monte Vista High boys lacrosse an 8-6 win Friday over rival San Ramon Valley to capture the program's first East Bay Athletic League title since 2007.

"It's huge," Tabor said of the league championship. "We're going to get a lot of credit around school. It's hard to ask for anything else."

Along with wresting the EBAL crown from two-time defending champion San Ramon Valley, the host Mustangs avenged their 9-5 loss to the Wolves in last year's North Coast Section Division 1 final.

"We all supported each other and didn't get down on each other. We pushed ourselves to get better," Tabor said. "We were able to clean up whatever mistakes we had tonight and win."

All three of Pimobo's goals were unassisted, as were both by Wiley Bonham, as Monte Vista finished the regular season undefeated on the field. However, their record has what Mustangs coach Joe Rabinowitz called "an asterick" because Monte Vista forfeited its season-opener to Marin Catholic for unknowingly using an ineligible player.

That didn't put a damper on the Mustangs' celebration Friday, though. Particularly after the Monte Vista (19-1, 7-0 EBAL) had to hold on for dear life once the Wolves (10-8, 5-2 EBAL) cut the lead to two with just under three minutes left.

"At the end of the day, they're obviously a very good team," Wolves coach Peter Worstell said. "You don't have that record if you don't have a lot of firepower. Give them credit, they got the job done."

San Ramon Valley's Drew Erikson and Monte Vista's Poochie Semmler scored with 90 seconds of each other for a 1-1 tie after the first quarter. Chris Ryan and Pimbo added Mustang goals late in the second stanza before Seth Garff cut the advantage to 3-2 with 15.6 seconds till halftime by stealing from Tabor off an inbound throw and finding the open net.

Monte Vista came out firing in the third quarter. Pimbo ended a long possession by attacking inside and scoring, then fired again after a spin move for his third goal.

"He was really patient," Rabinowitz said. "He would dodge, realize he didn't have an opportunity, back out, scan the defense and go again to get a better lane."

Added Tabor, "We can always look to him to make big plays in big games."

Pimbo was just as complimentary of Tabor, who he said had an "insane" performance.

By the midway point of the third period, Chase Jolie had also scored to push the Mustangs up 6-2. Erikson scored twice more and Erik Arvesen added two goals, but Bonham's unassisted bullets from outside proved enough to prevail.

"It really helped to get the first punch and the second punch in the second half," said Pimbo, who also had a team-high six ground balls. "I think that's what carried us to the win."



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