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NCS boys lacrosse: Monte Vista downs San Ramon Valley again to advance to title game



San Ramon Valley's Alex Brown (41) plays defense against Monte Vista's Chris Ryan (25) during their NCS Division 1 boys lacrosse semifinal match at Monte Vista High School in Danville, Calif., on Wednesday, May 18, 2016. (Susan Tripp Pollard/Bay Area News Group)

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DANVILLE — Nate Fernandez was so instrumental Wednesday that Wiley Bonham and Devin Spencer, who each had hat tricks, and both head coaches noted the junior's influence in the Monte Vista boys lacrosse team's 12-8 triumph over rival San Ramon Valley in a North Coast Section Division 1 semifinal.

"He worked so hard the whole game on ground balls and that's what we really needed," Bonham said. "Nate set the tone there. Those ground balls really saved us in the end."

Fernandez's most impressive face-off was right after a goal by the host Mustangs (21-1). He won the ensuing draw and dished to Bonham, who slung in a score seven seconds after the first of a three-goal swing that proved too much for the Wolves (12-9) to overcome.

Chris Ryan added two goals and an assist, Poochie Stemmler had a score and two helpers and Joe Tabor tallied 11 saves to send Monte Vista to the NCS Division 1 final Saturday at 2 p.m. against De La Salle, which outlasted Granite Bay 14-13 in overtime of the other semifinal.

What made the win "extra emotional" for Fernandez, according to coach Joe Rabinowitz, was that he transferred to Monte Vista from San Ramon Valley before this season. That was particularly the case because Fernandez didn't play much against the Wolves on senior night two weeks ago, when Monte Vista won 8-6 to secure the East Bay Athletic League title.

"I told him, 'You're going to get another chance — be ready,'" Rabinowitz said. "And he was. Nate performed tonight."

The victory was also sweet revenge for the Mustangs' senior class, which lost to the Wolves in last year's NCS title game and were bounced by SRV in a semifinal as freshmen.

"Every time we play San Ramon it's a big game," Spencer said. "To beat 'em two times in one year is even bigger, and on this stage it's huge."

Jack Phillips and Drew Erikson scored twice apiece for the Wolves and Joe Carrington had two assists.

"We showed up ready to play. I'm really proud of the troops," San Ramon Valley coach Peter Worstell said. "It was tight all the way until they just went on a great run of possessions. That's where the separation started."

Rabinowitz praised his team's ability to play together and said the scoring flurry made all the difference.

“First quarter is kind of a boxing match, throw your jab and feel them out, and then we figure them out and make adjustments,” he said. “We tend to go on runs. This team has been so consistent. We’ve got three seniors playing attack and these guys know how to get buckets.”



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