



Mark Patton

A Teddy Bear of a rivalry

Bishop Diego High School's football rivalry with Carpinteria has a different feel this season.

It's not exactly hot and heavy. It's more like warm and fuzzy.

In my day, we played the rivalry like the Hatfields and the McCoys.

There was nothing violent or destructive about it. During Little Big Game Week, our weapons of mass destruction at Bishop were little more than a few hundred rolls of toilet paper. Carpinteria's escalation of hostilities never went beyond a few volleys of eggs.

But the game was always rancorous, even if neither of us were ranked.

It made sense to us that the game's MVP award — the G.I. Forum Trophy — sounded like something you'd earn in battle.

So you'd expect this year's Oct. 12 showdown to be all-out war. The Cardinals were ranked No. 1 and

Please see **PATTON** on **C8**

Longtime rivals earn high marks for character these days

■ PATTON

Continued from Page C1

the Warriors No. 4 in this week's CIF-Southern Section Northwest Division poll.

But I'm hearing things about both teams that make me wonder if the Mother Of All Small-School Rivalries will develop into something from The Mother Teresa Playbook.

We used to psych up for football games by jostling each other. But Bishop prepared for Friday's game with eighth-ranked La Salle by embracing a young leukemia patient.

Omar Ibarra, 11, joined the Cardinals' captains for the pregame coin flip. They gave him a jersey and an autographed football. His family, which includes a younger sister and baby brother, received donations during the game, which included diapers, kids' movies, school supplies and Legos.

It was part of the school's partnership with the Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation to provide support to families living with children who are battling cancer.

Ibarra was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia on June 24.

Previously at Kellogg Elementary School, Ibarra must now complete sixth grade at home. "He'll go through a total of 3½ years of chemo," Bishop athletic director Dan Peeters said.

Senior Christian Pearson, Bishop's grizzly of an All-State linebacker, has actually been a Teddy Bear for awhile now, volunteering with that organization since the ninth grade.

"I've had family and friends with cancer, so it was something I really wanted to get involved with," he said. "Getting to help out with something like this is one of the best things we get to do as athletes."

I'd figured that at least one of my Cardinal descendants was a mean machine when fullback Aidan Williams was ejected from last week's Santa Ynez game after allegedly punching a Pirate during the scramble for a loose ball.

The section reversed the call a few days later after the game film

had been reviewed. Apparently he was trying to punch loose the ball, not the Pirate's mouthguard.

"It seemed puzzling to me, especially since Aidan had helped the kid up," coach Tom Crawford said.

I would've expected Carpinteria High to gain a streak of meanness last week after getting stuck in freeway traffic while on its way to play South Torrance.

"We got within 20 miles of the restaurant for our pregame meal, but it took another hour and 15 minutes just to get there," coach Ben Hallock said. "We didn't get there until like 4:45."

Such high anxiety before a game would've been the recipe for a food fight in my day. Carpinteria athletic director Pat Cooney did get a note afterward from the manager at Kings Hawaiian Restaurant.

"The manager specifically cited the good manners and positive spirit of our student athletes," Cooney said.

"Our guys were great, and they've been like that all the way along," Hallock said. "It's because we've got great leadership."

"We put an onus on our captains and leaders to make sure that guys are where they're supposed to be, dress the way they're supposed to dress, and behave the way they're supposed to behave."

The prospects for any future Carpinteria meanness were dashed the previous week when Cooney got a phone call about his junior varsity team.

"A Templeton parent congratulated the JV football Warriors for an exceptionally positive show of sportsmanship following their game," he said. "This was on the heels of one of the most difficult bus rides that any of our teams have ever experienced, and a game that turned out in favor of the Eagles."

So don't expect the Hatfields and the McCoys on Oct. 12. This rivalry is now more like the Mahatma Ghandis vs. the Dalai Lamas.

Of course, my predictions aren't fool-proof. I could always end up with some egg on my face.

Mark Patton's column appears on Thursday and Saturday. Email: mpatton@newspress.com