



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

CIENEGA'S VERSATILE QUARTERBACK IS A TRUE LEADER

PHOENIX, AZ (November 20, 2008) – In these days of specialization, it is rare to find a high school athlete who participates in more than one sport.

Seth Mejias-Brean is one of those throwback rarities. He is the starting quarterback for Vail Cienega and plays on the school's basketball and baseball teams.

While it is possible he could be offered a college baseball scholarship as an outfielder-infielder or perhaps even be drafted by a professional team, Mejias-Brean's sole focus is on football.

He has a burning desire to find a way to help his seventh-seeded team defeat No. 2 host Scottsdale Chaparral on Friday night in a Class 4A Division I quarterfinal game. Kickoff is 7 p.m.

It will be the second time the teams have met this season. Chaparral defeated Cienega 23-20 in the second game of the season. The only other loss for Cienega (9-2) was to last season's state runner-up, Tucson Canyon del Oro 35-27. If Cienega defeats Chaparral, it could mean another shot at CdO in the semifinals.

"They (Chaparral) are a great team," Mejias-Brean said. "They are very athletic, like we are. We are going to have to play great, punch the ball in every time."

Few outside the Tucson area know of Mejias-Brean, but he is one of the state's most versatile quarterbacks.

The 6-foot-2, 190-pound senior has passed for nearly 2,000 yards and rushed for more than 600, combining for 28 touchdowns.

He carries a 4.0 grade-point average and hopes to be a dentist some day, according to Cienega coach Nemer Hassey. In regard to ability, Hassey compares Mejias-Brean to Reggie Robertson, who Hassey coached at Tucson Sahuaro and went on to play at the University of California-Berkeley.

"He's a great student, and character-wise, he's the best," Hassey said. "He might be the best athlete at our school. He's very smart, understands the game, a real competitor and leader."

"A coach needs to trust his kids and I trust him. He's all you want in a player."

Mejias-Brean likes the leadership role, although it isn't always easy.

"I can be kind of shy, but I have tried to talk a little more this year," he said. "There have been times when I haven't been really sure about what to say. I sometimes lead more by example."

Unlike many of his teammates and other players around the state, Mejias-Brean came to Cienega without having played organized football.

He picked up the game quickly.

“In a way, not having played didn’t allow him to develop any bad habits, so he came in and we were able to work with him,” Hassey said.

Mejias-Brean worked on his completion ratio over the summer and getting more familiar with his receivers.

Cienega finished second in a passing tournament in the San Diego area. The experience also helped the players in the bonding process.

Now, the quarterback says, “I am very pleased with what we have done, but we still have work to do. We have a great desire to win and have put in a lot of hard work. Our execution has gotten better. We want to play all 48 minutes, until the very end.”

He enjoys the freedom the coaches give him to tuck the ball under his arm and run if no passing opportunities are available.

And he enjoys playing for the fans in Vail and the surrounding area.

“They have been very supportive,” Mejias-Brean said.

Hassey hopes that the story of Mejias-Brean’s accomplishments will spread among the young athletes in the area and motivate them to follow in his footsteps.

“We opened up in 2001, and played schools like Chaparral because you build a program by playing the top teams,” Hassey said. “You also build a program with athletes like him. I think we are getting better every year.”

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