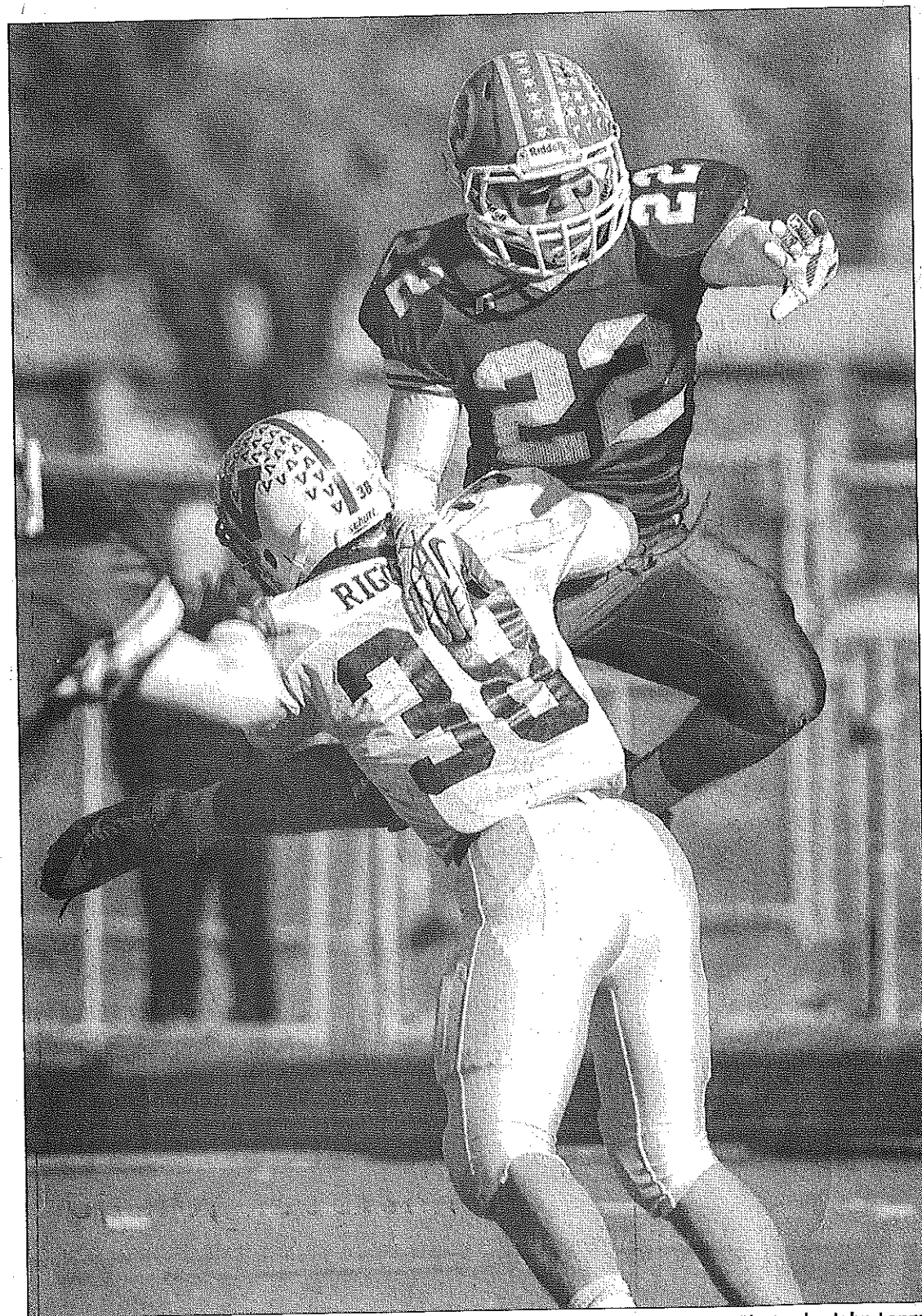


Chiefs keep rolling with eye on prize

Face unbeaten Mountain Lakes Saturday for state sectional championship



Photos by John Lanza

Caldwell High School linebacker Nolan Smith jumps high in an attempt to block a Verona punt in the Chiefs' 14-6 Thanksgiving Day victory over Verona.

Defense rules in 14-6 victory over Verona

By **JOSE ORTIZ**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

WEST CALDWELL – With the state sectional championship game looming Saturday, any thought of the Caldwell High School Chiefs easing up in their Thanksgiving Day game against Verona were non-existent.

The Chiefs registered their 10th victory of the season, a 14-6 defensive gem in a game played at Travis Field, home of the West Essex High School Knights in North Caldwell.

Because of excessive rain on Wednesday, Nov. 27, the game was moved from Caldwell High School's Bonnell Field, which is grass, to West Essex, where there is a turf field.

"Having to come over here because of our field, with all of the rain and then freezing, our field is unplayable," said Caldwell head coach Ken Trimmer. "I sure hope when we have our next bond issue for the turf field, I sure hope the people are going to support it."

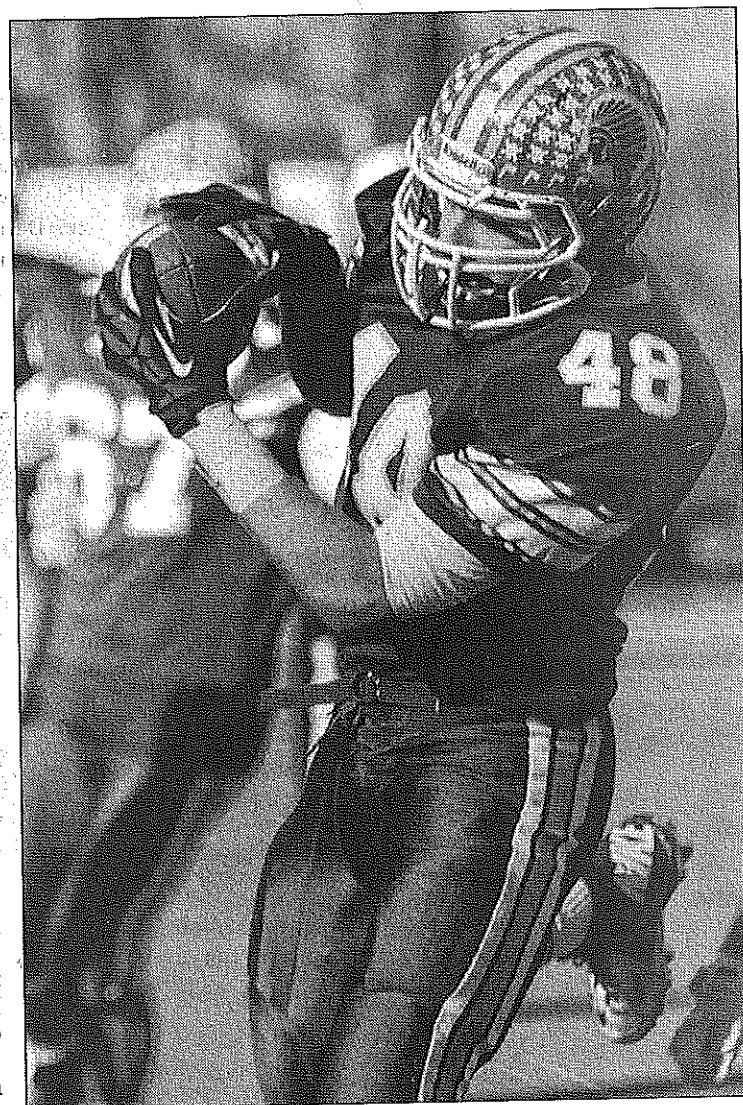
Caldwell's defense has been outstanding throughout the season, but the Chiefs have gone to another level in recent weeks, holding their last four opponents to just 8.5 points per game.

That proved to be the key in their victory over Verona.

Joe Salter tossed a pair of touchdown passes to Jack Kinney, and Caldwell's defense made it hold up, stifling the Hillbillies drive after drive, in yet another dominant performance by the Chiefs' defensive front.

"This is the biggest game of the year for Verona, they knock off Caldwell and they feel good for 12 months," said Trimmer. "That's the way we went into the game. We had kids who could not play because they were hurt, but the other kids stepped up."

Both defenses played well ear-



Tight end Sean Clarkin of Caldwell High School makes a nice catch in the Thanksgiving Day game against Verona.

ly on, with seven of the game's first eight drives ending in punts, and the other on a missed 37-yard field goal. But with 1:55 left in the first half, Salter hit Kinney with an over the shoulder throw for a 22-yard touchdown.

Caldwell's defense forced a three-and-out on the ensuing possession, and got Salter and the Chiefs' offense the ball back with 44 seconds - they only needed eight. On the very first play of the drive, Salter found Kinney again on the right sideline, on virtually the same play as the first touchdown pass.

"We've really been building up

since freshman year. We have a little bit of a tandem going, it got real stronger over the last couple of weeks, throwing the ball and everything," Kinney said. "But it's really a team game it doesn't come down to two guys, or one guy, or anything. It's an 11 man game."

That was enough, as Verona struggled to get anything going all game long. The Chiefs allowed just 175 yards of total offense, most of which came on Verona's final desperation drive, when the cosmetic touchdown was punched in with no time on

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