The annual battle between the prison officers from High Desert State Pison and the California Correctional Center comes down to the final seconds. The annual gridiron battle between officers from High Desert State Prison and the California Correctional Center was decided in the final seconds Friday, May 11 at Lassen High School's Arnold Field.

CCC stuffed High Desert's last scoring attempt on fourth down with 50 seconds left, giving the Mustangs a 18-16 victory in front of a raucous crowd at the Third Annual Grizz Bowl.

The officers earned bragging rights for the first time after succumbing to High Desert twice before.

"It was the most exciting finish this event has seen," High Desert State Prison California Correctional Peace Officers Association President Mark Viale said.

CCC got on the scoreboard first with Beau Nelson running the opening kickoff 85 yards for the touchdown.

From then on, the Mustangs kept the High Desert offense in check with Chris Green, Dan Valadez, Joel Kruger and Alonzo Nalls leading the defensive effort in the first quarter.

Meanwhile, CCC added another score with Moses McCraney finding the end zone from seven yards out and pushing the lead to 12-0.

High Desert regrouped on offense in the second quarter behind the running of Rob St. Andre. The running back scored on a four-yard run as part of his 58 total yards on the night.

But Nelson answered on the ensuing kickoff, returning it 95 yards for the score to give CCC a 18-8 halftime lead.

The Mustangs threatened to blow the game open at the start of the second half. Anthony Ford and Nalls combined for 74 yards on the ground.

High Desert's defense held strong though with Dan Pedicord, Steve Leese, Randy Abney and James Quirring leading the way. The four totaled 26 tackles and one interception.

Meanwhile, the Dawgs pulled within two points on a seven-yard pass from Gary McCoy to Zane Madrigal. The drive was fueled by McCoy's tosses to Darren Freeman, John McClellan and Madrigal for 67 yards.

The game benefited Lassen High School's football program the most. The boosters club earned money through food sales and the program received a $1,000 donation from CCPOA.

"This event is always a big help to us," Lassen head football coach Tom St. Jacques said. "We use the money for a variety of things, but mostly it helps us pay for our summer trip to Oregon."

The Lassen players will be headed to Gold Beach, Ore., where they will match up with some of

Oregon's top teams. The players compete in a variety of weight lifting competitions, while each of the school's offenses and defenses square off in scrimmages. Each year, the Grizzlies have emerged as one of the more-skilled teams.

"It's a big deal for us. It shows us how far we've come since the end of the previous season and where we need to be once this season starts," St. Jacques said. "Without it, it would be difficult to gauge how good of a team we are."

Lassen begins two weeks of spring football practice later this month, ending with the Seventh Annual Purple and Gold Game on Friday, June 1.

CCPOA also donated $1,000 to Westwood High School's football program and another $1,000 to the Susanville Elk's Lodge Academic Scholarship Fund.

"We really want to thank everyone involved in the event to help raise money," High Desert State Prison CCPOA Vice President Andrew Wellborn said. "The players who volunteered gave it their all and more. The enthusiasm they show makes it that much more competitive. We're already looking forward to Grizz Bowl IV."

The game is the brainchild of Lassen assistant football coach Scott Brown three years ago in an attempt to raise money.

The program enters a contract with a business to provide the players' equipment.

Andrew Wellborn contributed to this article.