By Rob Brockmeyer
Sports Editor

Team awaits fate of runnning back Taylor Polan this week. It was business as usual for Lassen High School's football team last Friday as the Grizzlies found little resistance from Modoc, cruising to a 48-19 win and improving to 3-0.

What could be considered as just an expected victory over a Division III opponent, Lassen's play was encouraging as a major decision looms this week.

The Grizzlies tacked up 350 yards of offense without Taylor Polan, last year's offensive start and a preseason All-Northern Section pick this season.

The senior did not suit up for the game with doctor's orders to rest his strained anterior cruciate ligament.

"We'll find out if we will lose him for the rest of the season or what," Lassen St. Jacques said last Sunday. "The doctor is going to determine how tight his knee is and how much strength he has got in it. Obviously, we all hope he's going to return. Taylor has put in a lot of work into his senior year. If he doesn't return, the guys will have to keep stepping up."

Stepping up is what they did.

Polan was not missed against the Braves, who were playing their first game of the season.

Lassen piled up 350 yards on offense with 115 of them coming in the air.

On the opening kickoff, the Grizzlies struck first as T.J. Cowan broke free for 92 yards and a touchdown to give Lassen a lead it never relinquished.

Cody Frailey tacked on a 22-yard scoring run on a inside reverse, and after driving the length of the field four minutes later, Ross Sobierajski busted across the goal line to push the lead to 21-6.

Replacing Polan, E.J. Persons added a 22-yard touchdown run. Modoc then scored off a fumble, and with a second left in the first half, John Black hit Ryan Marshall on the fly, resulting in a touchdown pass and 35-12 halftime lead.

Lassen yielded just one more score, while Frailey found the end zone from two yards out and backup quarterback Shawn St. Jacques connected with Mike Wambsgan on a two-yard touchdown pass.

"The score was about what we thought it would be. Although we didn't think they would score as many points against us, we did run the offense well and the defense shut down their run," St. Jacques said.

Lassen's fumble late in the first half was the team's first in three games.

"The offense looked good and is improving and the defense's play has been a big positive. Also, our special teams' play has been great. In addition to the kickoff return, those guys had us playing on a short field all night long," he said.

Black and Chuck Mahan had their best games of the season. Black completed seven of nine passes for 115 yards, while Mahan caught two passes for 29 yards, picked off a pass and ran back two kickoffs past midfield.

The Grizzlies wore American flags on their jerseys in remembrance of last week's terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon.

Chico comes to town this Friday for homecoming, owning a 1-2 record. The Panthers beat Anderson to start the year, but since then have suffered losses to Enterprise (41-3) and Las Plumas (21-7).

"Chico played Las Plumas real tough and I know they've got some athletes. They run a pro-style offense and come at you with a balanced attack. On defense, they pressure you. They blitz two to three guys every play and that's going to test our young offensive line," St. Jacques said. "We have to pick up the stunts and block the right people. Hopefully when they blitz, we can get the big play."

Oddly enough last year, the Panthers failed to win a game. Head coach Al Darby is joined by former Anderson head coach Mike Cooper, and both feel they will be competitive throughout the year. Keep an eye on quarterback Steve Nelson, fullback Victorino Mojica, tight end Ryan Keller, lineman Patrick Feaster, defensive back/kicker David Wymore, and running back Sam Fitsum.

In other preseason games around the Northern Section, Foothill buried Anderson 48-0; Las Plumas beat Chico 21-7; Pleasant Valley edged Enterprise 37-32; Corning defeated Red Bluff 25-7; Orland slid past Willows 34-19; Paradise handled Gridley 34-0; West Valley nipped Shasta 21-19, and Oroville tied Encina 22-22.

Junior varsity

Lassen moved to 2-1 after its easiest win of the season, defeating Modoc 22-0.

Matt Falkowski found the end zone three times while totaling 225 yards in just nine carries.

Tyler Singh gained 76 yards in 13 carries, helping Lassen to 332 rushing yards.

"We ran the ball real well and pretty much dominated on offense," Lassen head coach Paul Prince said. "Our offensive line blocked well and is really improving. We've got two real tough

games coming up in Chico and Foothill."