

Piedmont falls 6-2 to Berkeley on Senior Night

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High played its last flag football game at Witter Field for its regular season on Monday, October 21, falling to 6-2 to Berkeley in a strong defensive showing. The Highlanders honored its eight seniors for Senior Night: Dorothy Nemeth, Miya Fujimoto, Ella Yasar, Mary Schickedanz, Alma Ruberto, Lucy Barton, and Eunice and Cyntiche Kouadio.

“The seniors had a good night tonight, which is great to see. It’s going to be hard replacing them because they are the original players,” said coach Beth Black.

Piedmont’s only points came on a safety where rusher Elspeth Grippando locked down Berkeley’s running back in her own end zone.

“I knew they did a lot of hand-

offs and it tricked me a few times, but adjusting paid off,” Grippando said of the play.

Grippando has been a bright spot this season as a rushing defender on every single play. She’s recording sacks in every game since moving into the role and poses problems for quarterbacks, forcing them into quick decisions. Grippando, who also plays soccer, found the ability to translate her pressing on the pitch into pressure on the gridiron.

“I was put on rush and something clicked. I like rushing, I feel like I can change the game there. It’s perfect because I can just chase people. I play soccer and that’s a lot of running,” Grippando said.

The result brought their record to 5-10, now suffering their fifth loss in a row. The Highlanders’ offense has scored one touch-



Piedmont honored its eight seniors on the flag football roster. Pictured on Senior Day are coach Beth Black (back left), assistant coach Hayley Adams, Ella Yasar, Alma Ruberto, Miya Fujimoto, Cyntiche Kouadio, assistant coach Reggie Smith, Dorothy Nemeth (front left), Mary Schickedanz, Lucy Barton, and Eunice Kouadio.



Elspeth Grippando sacks the Berkeley quarterback. Staff Photos



Dahlia Osman makes an interception against Berkeley. Staff Photos

down or less in every game during the span. Black knows their offense needs to get into the end zone to win games.

“Our defense is holding people down and once we connect all the pieces, we’re going to be amazing. We need to score touchdowns, that’s really it, that’s what I’m looking for in these last games,” Black said.

Piedmont travels to Arroyo in San Lorenzo for its final regular season game on October 23 before the Western Alameda County Conference tournament with the first round next week on Monday, October 28. To qualify for the tournament, PHS must be among the best four teams in the WACC’s North Division.

Game Recap

Both teams traded possession until Berkeley broke the deadlock with 8:08 left in the first half. Piedmont’s defense forced a Yellowjackets punt in its first possession, including a pass defense

from Yasar, while they forced a turnover on downs at its own 23 on Berkeley next drive. Dahlia Osman had a pass defense on Berkeley’s third series, helping toward a punt.

Berkeley scored after taking an interception to Piedmont’s 14-yard line, hurling a 14-yard touchdown to the back corner of the end zone. A failed two-point conversion kept the game at 6-0 with 7:25 left in the first half.

But Piedmont’s offense just couldn’t find the finishing touch despite putting together long drives. They had a 10-play series stall out at the Berkeley 27 with 15:40 remaining in the game. After forcing a punt thanks to a sack by Grippando, another _play drive die after getting into the red zone. During the series, Nemeth was found for gains of 12 and 21. However, PHS committed another interception on 3rd-and-Goal with 8:30 left.

Keeping PHS in the game was Osman grabbing an interception

with 4:40 on the clock, taking it to the 33. Piedmont drove down to the Berkeley 3-yard line, but an incomplete pass in the back of the end zone on 4th down caused a turnover on downs.

Shortly after, Grippando tackled Berkeley’s running back in the end zone for a safety with 43 seconds left. On 3rd-and-17, Berkeley grabbed another interception.

Final stats: Grippando had seven tackles, two sacks and two tackles for loss. Osman had one interception, one pass defense, and four tackles. Nemeth had five receptions. Yasar had three pass defenses. Fujimoto had seven carries and two receptions.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (5-10 overall, 2-6 league) heads to San Lorenzo to play Arroyo today, October 23, at 4:00 p.m. The WACC Tournament’s first game is on Monday, October 28; opponent and start time is to be determined.

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