

Flag Football wins pair of games by 1 point each

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High’s flag football team improved its record to 5-5 with a pair of heated wins in the heat last week. They defeated Tennyson 7-6 under the lights at Witter Field on Thursday, October 3, and beat Mt. Eden 13-12 in Hayward the previous day.

“We had some injuries, which is normal at this point in the season, and everyone stepped up. We’ve played great defense and moving forward with creating turnovers,” coach Beth Black said.

It was a defensive battle against the Tennyson Lancers with back-and-forth possessions. Piedmont scored the game’s opening touchdown to go up 7-0 midway through the first half, and Tennyson scored on its first drive of the second half but missed its extra point attempt.

The Mt. Eden win, similarly, required strong defense with frequent blitzes by Elspeth Grippando and an interception and touchdown by Mary Schickedanz.

“We’ve been using Elspeth and our outside players really patiently. They are getting there and making plays. Elspeth keeps pushing and pushing; her role is really something that has developed as the season has gone on,” Black said.

Making her mark on the defensive side is junior leader Dahlia Osman. She’s the team leader in tackles and notable made the switch from outside cornerback to the safety role. It’s a move that has better utilized her consistent flag-pulling ability.

“I switched to safety this season. At cornerback, I was really stuck to just one side, so now I can play to both sides. The safety spot allows me to run around; I definitely like it, it gives me a lot more room to move up, move back, or make a play on the ball,”



Dahlia Osman returns an interception against Tennyson.



Dorothy Nemeth scored a touchdown and extra point against Tennyson.



Elspeth Grippando pulls a flag on Tennyson’s running back. She had one QB sack and one tackle for loss against Tennyson and two sacks against Mt. Eden

Osman said.

On offense, tall receiver Dorothy Nemeth, a senior, is proving to be a key weapon for the Highlanders. She scored a touchdown and extra point in the win over Tennyson and recorded an important 28-yard reception to extend their final drive.

“We did really well moving around the ball to different players tonight. While it’s fun to get the ball a lot, it’s important to get a lot of people the ball. On that play [28-yard reception], I actually ran the wrong route. I was supposed to run a corner route, but I saw an open space down the middle of the field. I just put my arms up and hoped for the best,” Nemeth said.

7-6 over Tennyson

Tennyson’s first drive got them to 1st-and-Goal at the Piedmont 20, but Piedmont turned the tide with a pass defense by Dahlia Osman and a sack by Elspeth Grippando. On the ensuing drive, Piedmont drove to the Tennyson

one with help from a 26 yard gain by Miya Fujimoto. On 4th-and-Goal, quarterback Edie Elmquist found Nemeth for a touchdown reception on a hitch route with 12:58 on the clock. Nemeth also caught the one-point conversion.

The Lancers scored quickly in the second half with after just two minutes, but Piedmont’s Eunice Kouadio had a critical pass defense on the one-point conversion to keep the Highlanders’ lead at 7-6. From there, Tennyson punted three times and tossed interceptions to Ella Yassar and Osman.

PHS’ final offensive drive ate the clock away from 2:23 down to 4 seconds, including Nemeth’s big 28-yard reception. Tennyson retain the ball at its own five and failed to go anywhere with Osman swatting down a pass to end it.

13-12 over Mt. Eden

Piedmont scored first but trailed 12-7 to end the first half, but took the lead early on in the second half and held on with solid defense.

PHS’ first touchdown came from Malia Williams came on a short catch and run into the end zone. During the drive, Williams also made a critical 11-yard reception on a pass from Elmquist, where Williams ranged to keep one foot in bounds down the sideline.

Piedmont made it 7-0 with a successful extra point attempt, where Elmquist hit Nemeth in the corner. Mt. Eden then scored two straight touchdowns to go ahead 12-7, but missed both of their extra point attempts—which wound up being critical toward the result.

In the second half, Piedmont’s defense came through as the playmaker and game-changer. Mary Schickedanz scored the game-winner on an interception taken to the house for a pick-six. Grippando also recorded two sacks.

Offensively, Piedmont drove down to the one-yard line twice, but couldn’t get the ball into the end zone. However, one of those drives was PHS electing to kneel the ball in victory formation to wind out the clock.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (5-5 overall, 2-2 league) heads to Encinal in Alameda on Thursday, October 10 at 5:45 p.m.

Tennis team nipped by Berkeley 4-3

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High’s girls’ tennis team suffered a tense 4-3 loss to Conference rivals, Berkeley, at the Berkeley Tennis Club on Thursday, October 3. It marked the team’s second league loss after losing to Alameda 5-2 the previous week.

“Another nail biter that didn’t go our way, unfortunately,” said PHS coach Jim Landes. “It came down to the third set in the third doubles match; it was the last match on the court. We’ll get Berkeley at home on the 24th and we’re looking forward to it.”

The match came down to the No. 3 doubles team of Inara Mehta and Abigail Call, who lost in a narrow three-set contest 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3.

“Abby and Inara started well, but two things happened. They relaxed and gave their opponents hope and then struggled keeping the ball away from Berkeley’s net person,” Landes described.

The result brings Piedmont’s record to 6-9 overall and 1-2 in league matches. They look ahead to another critical league match this week when hosting Bishop O’Dowd on Thursday, October 12.

Match Recap

At singles, Piedmont won one of four matches with Kate Jumper at No. 2 winning a three-set battle, 3-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-2.

“Kate gradually started playing better and better. After, she pulled out the second set tiebreak, she really settled down and went through the third set like a hot knife through butter,” Landes said.

Carolina Romanczuk lost a close match, 7-5, 6-4, at No. 1 singles. Arianna Kortum lost at No. 3 singles, 6-4, 6-2. Faith Chin lost 6-3, 6-1 at No. 4.

“Carolina had a good match against Sam Lopatin at No. 1. She struck the ball more cleanly and with more power than Sam, but just wasn’t quite consistent enough,” Landes said.

Piedmont won two of three doubles matches. At No. 1 Samantha Huynh and Emma Eisemon won in straight sets, 7-6 (7-1), 6-3. Emma Chan and Maddie Tran won 6-3, 6-1 at No. 2.

“Emma E. and Samantha had a very tight first set, but they turned on the jets in the tiebreak and won it 7-1. They continued to roll and won the second 6-3. Maddie and Emma C. built on their momentous win the prior week against Alameda and trounced the Berkeley team pretty easily,” Landes said.

At No. 3 doubles, Mehta and Call fought to three sets before losing 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (6-9 overall, 1-2 league) hosts Bishop O’Dowd on Thursday, October 12 at 3:30 p.m. at the Corey Reich Tennis Courts.



Kate Jumper won her No. 2 singles match against Berkeley.



Emma Eisemon won her No. 1 doubles match with partner Samantha Huynh.



Thursdays loss to Berkeley came down to No. 3 doubles team of Inara Mehta and Abigail Call (not pictured).