

SPORTS

Highlanders tame Middletown Mustangs 42-21

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High’s football team gained its first win of the season under the lights of Witter Field on Friday, September 6, claiming a dominant 42-21 win over the visiting Middletown Mustangs. It was a mighty response to Piedmont’s season-opener loss to Salsian the previous week.

“It was just great to see. This game was a little personal, just to bounce back. We’ve gone through a lot of turmoil the past few weeks and it felt like we got the nucleus back together. This was a big one for us,” coach Jordan Seiden said.

Senior quarterback Markos Lagios finished the day with four rushing touchdowns, while running back Tommy Ashton had a pair of scores.

“Tommy and Sam [Shelby] did all the work to get us down the field. The touchdowns are really all three of us doing our job; it was a team win, everyone did their job. A shoutout to our offensive line, they did a great job and are improving every week,” Lagios said.

“We knew our opening two games were going to be tough. We didn’t take care of business last week, but we came in tonight after a really good week of practice. The energy coming out of the locker room was there, we really set the tone early and kept it flowing throughout the game,” Ashton mentioned.



Staff Photos

Quarterback Markos Lagios (4) ran for four touchdowns against Middletown. He celebrates with Sam Shelby (2) and Nick King (77).

Although he didn’t finish with any touchdowns, receiver Sam Shelby recorded seven receptions for 118 yards, averaging 16.85 yards per catch.

“We played really well as a team today. We were super cohesive and coherent to everything. We knew it was a must-win and we came in with a mentality to just leave everything out there on the field,” Shelby said.

Middletown actually had control of the game through much of the first half, holding a 15-14 lead with eight minutes left in the second quarter. But Piedmont’s defense held the Mustangs scoreless until 1:23 left in the fourth when the game was already far out of reach.

Ashton, who doubles up as a

middle linebacker, was a big part of the defensive performance. He made sure to praise fellow linebackers Cash Elmquist and Xavier Anderson.

“We knew going into the second half that we had to bring intensity; defense wins games. My fellow linebacker, Cash Elmquist, he’s the brains of the operation. I work off of him and he led us to that defensive stop. Also, Xavier Anderson was great out there,” Ashton said.

The Highlanders now continues its non-league schedule when hosting Mt. Eden of the Western Alameda County Conference Shoreline Division on Friday, September 13. PHS received a promotion to the Mission Division after winning the Shoreline last year, which included a 46-7 win over Mt. Eden.

Game Recap

After Middletown went up on the opening possession with a near four-minute drive, Piedmont drove from its own 26 to the Mustangs’ 21 on three consecutive screen passes to Shelby. Then, Cash Panico took a reception 20 yards to the Middletown one, leading to Ashton punching it into the end zone with six minutes left in the first.

Piedmont’s defense then forced a turnover on downs on 4th-and-Goal from its 10 yard line. On the ensuing possession, Shelby had a 24-yard reception followed by a 34 yard reception where he switched the field on his run after the catch, similar to DeSean Jackson with Cal in 2007. On 1st-and-10 from the Middletown 14, Lagios took a quarterback keeper to the house, making it 14-8 with 40 seconds left in the first.

Middletown went back up 15-14 with 8:02 left in the first half, but that was the turning point. Piedmont then scored on a 13-play, seven minute series that included a fourth-down conversion on a fake punt. Driving down to the two, Lagios got it into the end zone for his second score—making it 21-15 with 1:51 left.

In the third, Xavier Anderson took the opening kickoff all the way to the Mustang’s 25. On 3rd-and-6 at the Middletown nine, Lagios took another keeper to the one. Ashton then scored his second touchdown on a run up the gut, 28-15 with 9:52 on the clock. [See Football on page 29](#)

PHS boys’ soccer coach Todd Sullivan resigns after 8 successful years



Staff Photos

Piedmont High School boys’ soccer coach Todd Sullivan resigned earlier this summer. He is one of the most successful soccer coaches in school history. He is shown after his team won the 2022 North Coast Section championship.

By Jonathan Comeaux

During the summer, Piedmont High boys’ soccer coach Todd Sullivan, originally from England, announced a big change in his life. He has elected to step away from coaching the high school game. Still coaching at the club level at 24-7 UK Soccer Academy, Sullivan decided he wanted to spend more time with one-year old son. After eight years at the school, Sullivan becomes one of Piedmont’s most successful soccer coach in school history.

“It was a tough decision,” he said. “With the family, the plan was to get back to the UK before the 2024 season and I wouldn’t be able to coach. But, for now, we’re staying in the U.S. Hopefully now I’ll be able to catch some games without being a coach. It was a great eight years. There was never a season where we didn’t give it everything as a school,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan revived Piedmont High’s boys’ soccer program, achieving several honors. His teams finished on top of the Western Alameda County Conference Shoreline Division in 2019, 2021, and 2022, earning the a promotion to the Foothill Division.

But his greatest accomplishment was leading the team to back-to-back Division 4 North Coast Section titles in 2022 and 2023. The first title came in a 1-0 win over No. 2 University as the No. 1 seed at Witter Field. The second was another 1-nil win over No. 2 University, this time com-

ing as the tournament’s Cinderella story as a No. 8 seed. Piedmont now plays in Division 3 after a promotion in 2023.

The 2022 NCS title was the boys’ team’s s first section title in school history. The second NCS championship was a surprise. Piedmont was the No. 8 seed that year.

“I’ve been asked this a few times and I always answer the same – one title isn’t more special than the other. We had fantastic players the first year we won it, then were underdogs the next year against some really good teams. The boys really did take the mantra of having a tough, hardworking identity.

“The 2023 team if anything was more surprising to people on our team and perhaps the larger soccer world in the Bay Area. People recognized Piedmont as a serious team. I’d go as far to say the 2023 probably had a greater impact on the school.”

2019 marked the school’s first league championship in 10 years. That February night when Piedmont claimed the WACC banner appeared to be the turning point of the program.

Sullivan signed on as head coach in the winter of 2016-17, replacing Rory O’Connor. In four years as head coach, O’Conner had one NCS win and finished with a positive winning percentage just one time. PHS went 9-2-9 (W-T-L) in Sullivan’s first year and 7-2-13 in his second year when still developing a system change –

[See Todd Sullivan on page 29](#)



Todd Sullivan concludes his time at Piedmont with 87 wins and 155 total matches as head coach.



Tommy Ashton had two touchdowns against Middletown as a running back and seven tackles as a linebacker.



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Troop 6

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ished the kayak leg of the race, our teammates realized they had lost the baton (a Snickers bar) in the water when they tipped over. We prevailed upon the camp to give us a new baton, and I swam the final leg of the race, handed the baton off to Nick and he then ate the baton at the end of the

race, capping off our last place finish. All in all, Troop 6 had an eventful summer. Our planned expedition next summer is to the Northern Tier in Canada for a canoeing trip. Hopefully, our canoeing skills are better than our kayaking skills.



Nico Salvadei and Benjie Chien complete camp evaluation forms at the end of the week.



Campers wait for the boat to take them home.

Todd Sullivan

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creating a high-pressing and possessive style. “That first season was a learning curve, I learned a lot in that first season and it set us up for future success. We had gradual improvement and playoff maturity formed. The program just developed over the years. It was a perfect story with making some mistakes in my first year, learning a lot, managing to stay in the job and make adjustments to develop the program,” he said. “Now we’re one of the most competitive teams in the Foothill and up to D3; it brings a proud moment to take a step back and see where the program is now,” Sullivan said. The changes began to work by 2019 when PHS went 12-2-5 overall and was undefeated with a 9-1-0 record while winning the Shoreline banner. The Highlanders finished second in the Shoreline in 2020 prior to the pandemic with a record of 9-2-9, then returned for the shortened 2021 spring season with a perfect 10-0-0 record, Sullivan’s team then went 15-2-4 overall and 13-0-3 in league for another Shoreline banner and went on to win the NCS

title as the tournament’s favorite in 2022. The 2023 team went 13-6-5 and but upset higher ranked teams on the way to the NCS title as the No. 8 seed. They beat No. 1 Cardinal Newman, and No. 5 Healdsburg before taking down University at the Beach Chalet Field in Golden Gate Park. Although 2024 didn’t bring any banners, his team went 12-3-3 in its most recent season and challenged for the Foothill title at 7-3-2, finishing third. Their 1-nil win over Berkeley marked the first time Sullivan’s team had defeated the Yellowjackets and showed how far Piedmont soccer had come. “Definitely the Berkeley win is up there as a favorite memory. It was massive for the boys and me as well. Another favorite memory was the NCS win at Witter under the lights,” Sullivan said. In addition to Sullivan’s collection of championship banners, he finishes his time at Piedmont with 87 wins and 155 matches as head coach. He closes with a record of 87 wins, 19 ties, and 49 losses. Piedmont High School is in the hunt for its next boys’ soccer coach. The season begins in mid-November.



Troop 6 Scouts on steps at Camp Oljato: (bottom) Frederick Wade (left), Nico Salvadei; (middle row) Aidan Velasco, Connor Hulsy, Dean Jefferson, Benjie Calcoen; (top) Rocco Doubrava, Nick Castro, Elijah Satomi, Kyle Walsh. Not pictured: Rachael Walker



Troop 6 Scouts coming back from a star-gazing boat ride. Pictured are Jeff Green (left), Nick Castro, Nico Salvadei, Connor Hulsy, Rocco Doubrava, Aidan Velasco, Benjie Calcoen, Kyle Walsh, Elijah Satomi, Dean Jefferson and Frederick Wade

Football

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clock. After a three-and-out for the Mustangs, Piedmont scored again on a five minute drive—capping off with a 13-yard run by

Lagios into the end zone, 35-15 with 4:22 left. PHS scored its final touchdown with 4:15 left in the fourth



Jordan Alemania gets after the Middletown quarterback. He had three tackles for loss on the night.

quarter on a 10-play series that elapsed six minutes. PHS nearly scored on its opening play with a bomb to Shelby, but it was called back on a penalty. Instead, the Highlanders drove to the Middletown 19, leading to another long touchdown carry by Lagios. Final stats: Lagios completed 13/15 passes for 188 yards, to go along with 107 rushing yards and four touchdowns. Ashton finished with 12 rushing attempts for 81 yards and two touchdowns, while he recorded seven total tackles and a sack defensively. Shelby had seven receptions for 118 yards, to go along with four rushing attempts for 31 yards. Jordan Alemania had five tackles and three tackles for loss. NEXT UP Piedmont (1-1) hosts Mt. Eden on Friday, September 13 for the start of its league schedule at 7:00 p.m.