

SPORTS

Piedmont gets first win in school history, 12-6 over Mt. Eden

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High’s flag football team achieved history on Thursday, September 21. In its first year as a varsity sport, the team beat Mt. Eden on the road in Hayward 12-6 in come-from-behind fashion.

“I can breathe now,” said coach Beth Black with a laugh. “It was a hard week because we were inside and had to cut practice short due to the smoke [from forest fires]. We did some good reps on Monday. The girls’ understood what they needed to do. When they were on the field, they executed. I loved it,” she added.

The Highlanders scored all of their points in the second half, including the game-winning score on a 4th-and-goal play with just 15 seconds left. Quarterback Friedie Schickendanz found Malea Hartford with a nine-yard touchdown pass.

On the play, Schickendanz began scanning the field to her right before rotating back to the left, rifling a pass to Hartford. It came on a play the team had recently installed in its the play-book earlier in the week, With smoke blanketing the area, the squad was forced to practice indoors during the week.

“What’s fun about it was I wasn’t at practice the day we

installed that play. And then the next day, practice got cut in half because of smoke. So I actually ran that play only once. I just took a deep breath and threw to the first open girl I saw. It was awesome,” said Schickendanz.

“We just learned a new play in Tuesday’s practice; I basically just ran straight and sat right on the goal line. Friedie put in an amazing pass and we scored,” added Hartford.

Piedmont’s first points in school history were scored earlier in the game by backup quarterback Peyton Watson, and made a 26-yard run, evading multiple tacklers on her way to the end zone. On a 3rd-and-5 situation Watson tucked the ball under her arm and juke past a tackler. Initially she thought her flag was pulled after feeling a tug at her jersey. But she heard her teammates telling her to run, so she burst into another sprint and followed blocks on her way to the end zone.

“I was just running as fast as I could. I was checking for my flags once I reached the end zone [to make sure it hadn’t been pulled],” recalled Watson.

The Highlanders look ahead to a game with Encinal in Alameda tomorrow, September 28, at 4:30 p.m.

“We mean business,” said senior Mia Leggett. “People



Photo by Sophie Tess

Piedmont flag football players celebrate scoring the game-winning touchdown with 15 seconds left. It was the school’s first flag football win.



Staff Photo

Peyton Watson races down the field for a wild 26-yard touchdown, evading multiple defenders for the score.

should come out and watch our games. We’re a fun team to watch and it’s a super fun game to play.”

“It’s exciting. I feel like we’re creating traditions that will be passed down. Piedmont football has had a lot of success in the past. A lot of girls are out here. I think it’ll become a really great traditions,” added Hartford.

Game Recap

In the first half, Piedmont stopped Mt. Eden’s initial drive on 4th-and-goal at their own 16-yard line, driving the next possession to the Monarch’s 15 before the series stalled out. After forcing Mt. Eden to punt, Piedmont conceded the first points of the game after tossing a pick-six at their own 29-yard line to Monarchs’ linebacker Angelina Roxas, making it 6-0 after a failed two-point conversion with 4:10 left in the half.

Piedmont got down to Mt. Eden’s 20 on its next drive, featuring a 24-yard completion from Schickendanz to Mia Leggett, but they turned over on downs again – going into the half down 6-0.

PHS started with possession

in the second half and got all the way down to the Mt. Eden one-yard line, but failed to complete a pass on 4th-and-goal with 15:00 minutes remaining. After back and forth possessions, PHS stopped a critical 4th-and-5 situation at Mt. Eden’s 36 with 7:10 left in the game.

On 3rd-and-5 from the Monarchs’ 26, Watson came in at quarterback, using her legs after scanning the field for a pass, breaking to the end zone—beaming an ear-to-ear smile as her teammates swarmed her in the end zone to celebrate. A failed one-point conversion made it 6-6 with 4:40 left in the game.

Piedmont’s defense forced another turnover on downs at Mt. Eden’s 32 with 1:59 left in the game. On a 4th-and-7 situation, Schickendanz hit #7 on a critical eight-yard pass for the first down at the 19-yard-line. Then on 3rd-and-goal from the nine, Schickendanz went through her progression to find Hartford at the goal line with just 15 seconds on the clock.

The Highlanders’ sideline leaped, hands in the air, knowing



Staff Photo

Friedie Schickendanz launches a pass against Mt. Eden.

they had just one the game. Mt. Eden went four-and-out on its final possession.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (1-1 overall) looks ahead to Encinal in Alameda tomorrow, September 28, at 4:30 p.m.



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