

Piedmont’s defending WACC championship tennis team building towards season



Tanya Kononova enters her senior year after winning last year’s WACC singles title.

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont’s girls’ tennis team is about to begin its season which starts with its annual non-league match at Miramonte in Orinda on September 6. Last year the Highlander compiled a record of 16-3 on their way to an undefeated Western Alameda County Conference title before reaching the North Coast Section semifinals.

Coach Jim Landes and assistant coach Corey Reich are keeping watchful eyes to determine how this year’s singles and doubles lineups will resolve. Piedmont has a good cast of eight returning varsity players, but must replace five experienced layers dye to graduation, including No. 1 doubles team Michaela Bini and Mara LaForte, and No. 2 singles player Anne Jumper.

“We lost a few girls who graduated and some starters, but I think overall we will be almost as strong if not as strong as last season,” said Landes. “We did very well last season; we almost won



Sophomore Kate Jumper is Piedmont’s likely No. 2 singles starter.



Sophomore Arianna Kortum has been impressive since joining the team last year.

NCS and won the league.”

Returning for her senior year and second year on the team is Tanya Kononova, the No. 1 singles player since her arrival a year ago as a refugee from Ukraine. She won last year’s Western Alameda County Conference singles tournament. She’s been competing in local tournaments, boosting her ranking as she gains more recognition from colleges.

“We have Tanya back at No. 1,” confirmed Landes. “She’s better than she was last year, working hard and I’ve been helping her as much as I can, taking her to some tournaments. She’s been doing pretty well.”

Kononova may have some serious competition this year from Bishop O’Dowd’s No. 1, Polina Marakhtanova, a native of Russia, who didn’t play last year.

So far sophomore Kate Jumper, the younger sister of Anne, appears to be ready to claim the role of No. 2 singles.

“Kate mostly did doubles last year but she’s really playing well. Right now, she’s the clear No. 2,” said Landes.

Behind them, Landes is determining who looks best to round out their singles lineup and which players to pair together at doubles. Kate played doubles with classmate Arianna Kortum last year and performed well at the No. 3 spot. Senior Cecilia DeFazio and junior Emma Eisemon did well as a No. 2 doubles team, and have the possibility of playing singles this season.

Returning players senior Ellie Broscow, junior Abigail Call, and junior Carolina Romanczuk. New varsity athletes who have impressed are sophomores Samantha Huynh, Inara Mehta, Madeline Tran, and juniors Sophie LaForte and Alina Shahid.

“We’re not sure about 3-4 yet; we have about a lot of players who are really close in level,” explained Landes. “Some are better suited for singles and some for doubles. Carolina played No. 3 a lot last year. Ellie Broscow is a senior, and Arianna Kortum is a younger player who can play singles. Cecilia DeFazio is also a possibility at singles.”

Following Piedmont’s season-opener at Miramonte in Orinda on September 6, they’ll participate in the Golden State Championships on September 8-9 a highly competitive tournament with 30 teams being hosted by Gunn and Palo Alto High School.

Highlanders girls golf team shines in season debut

By Gary Lorin

The PHS girls golf team began their season at Metropolitan Golf Links on August 23 with a 3-school match with the temperature nearing 90 degrees. The team battled to a hard-fought split, winning one against San Leandro while bested by O’Dowd. Final scores were Bishop O’Dowd 259, Piedmont 273 and San Leandro 306.

Mei Assalian was the low scorer for the Highlanders, shooting a 41, followed by Mackenzie Seto-Nguyen 49, Henley Lorin 54, Lily Caldwell 58, Mariah Stewart 71. and Stella Izakson 71.

Assalian was the low medalist in the field of 18 players.

According to coach Gary Lorin, the 2023 roster is a mix between returning players and incoming talent that is sure to be a great mix to approach the new season.

The team will be back on the links on August 30 with a match against Berkeley at Tilden Park.



Piedmont golf team with coach Gary Lorin: Mariah Stewart (left), Lily Caldwell, Henley Lorin, Mackenzie Seto-Nguyen, and Mei Assalian

JV Highlanders lose opener to Pierce Bears

By Jason Shum and Nik Costello

Piedmont’s Junior Varsity football team survived a challenging game with Pierce High School in Arbutle (Colusa County) on Friday, August 25, in their first game of the season. Despite some signs of hope, turnovers and the opposing team’s formidable running game proved to be decisive factors that contributed to a 50-0 victory for the home team.

In contrast, Piedmont’s varsity played to a much more closely contested game with Pierce in a 28-21 loss.

As the game kicked off, Pierce quickly took control with a run-

ning game, and scored quickly. Amidst the challenges, Piedmont’s return specialists, George Bishop and Jason Shum, both made impressive returns of over 50 yards. However, Piedmont’s offense could do little to move the ball other than a 13-yard reception by Bishop and quarterback Cash Panico scrambling for 54 yards on the ground.

The game unfolded under scorching conditions, with temperatures soaring to 95 degrees. This heat took a toll on Piedmont’s players, evident from fatigue shown whenever there was a break in the action.

One bright spot was on Pierce’s lone passing attempt,

when freshman Diego Hurwitz picked off the pass. After that Pierce never threw the ball again for the rest of the game.

Defensive highlights included Cash Panico with 15 total tackles, Jason Shum eight tackles, and Nik Costello with a sack and seven tackles.

In the second half, Pierce returned an interception for a touchdown and continued using its running game to exploit the Scots’ defense.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (0-1) looks ahead to another tough non-league test on the road at Miramonte in Orinda this Friday evening, September 1.



Piedmont’s JV football team endured a lopsided loss at Pierce for their season-opener. They look to bounce back in week two against Miramonte

PIEDMONT SPORTS SCHEDULE						
Some events subject to change. (Revised - 8/30/23)						
Date	Day	Sport	Opponent	Loc.	Var.	JV.
Aug. 30	Wed.	Golf	Berkeley at Tilden Park	A	3:30	-----
Aug. 31	Thurs.	VB	Skyline (Oakland)	A	7:00	5:00
Sep. 1	Fri.	WP-B	Labor Day Bash at Newark Memorial	A	TBD	-----
		FB	Miramonte (Orinda)	A	7:00	4:00
Sep. 2	Sat.	WP-B	Labor Day Bash (Newark Memorial)	A	TBD	-----
Sep. 5	Tues.	VB	San Rafael	A	7:00	5:00
Sep. 6	Wed.	VB	Lick Wilmerding (San Francisco)	H	7:00	5:00
		TEN	Miramonte (Orinda)	A/H	3:30	3:30
KEY: H = Home A = Away						
FB = Football			G = Girls' Golf		TEN = Girls' Tennis	
VB = Girls' Volleyball			WP-B = Boys' Water Polo			