

# JV football team falls by 1 touchdown to O'Dowd

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont's Junior Varsity football team returned to action on Friday, October 15 after a three-week absence, and fall 22-14 to Bishop O'Dowd. It marked a return to action for the football program after canceling the remaining 5 varsity games on its schedule following a game on September 23.

"It was awesome to play a game again. It was our first game in three weeks; the kids have been antsy just waiting to get out there. The kids were super excited and were working hard all week in practice. It's a great group," said JV coach Bradley Smet, who also serves as the high school Athletic Director.

The JV squad inherited a few underclassmen on the varsity team.

"We were able to bring some of the kids down [from varsity to JV]. The sophomores including Brayden Hong and Derek Schleuning as juniors, so we were able to split players up more offensively and defensively. We didn't have to play all of our kids both ways and we were able to rotate players more. It gave an opportunity for kids to play and exert their energy in their primary role," explained Smet.

The Highlanders trailed 14-0 by the end of the first quarter after allowing a kickoff return for a touchdown, followed by O'Dowd scoring on a 65-yard touchdown pass.

"They had two big plays at the beginning of the game. Aside from those, I thought we did a great job controlling the game. That was the downfall in our last game against St. Mary's, where we suffered several turnovers.



JV coach Bradley Smet gives a play call to quarterback Brandon Dicke.



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Sophomore Tommy Ashton, who had been on the varsity team, scored a touchdown and a made a two-point conversion for the JV football team in its game with Bishop O'Dowd on October 15.



Miguel Long goes high for a touchdown reception against O'Dowd.

We asked the team to take care of the ball and that's what they did," said Smet.

Piedmont rallied in the fourth quarter to bring itself within one possession. With 8:16 left in

the game, quarterback Brandon Dicke connected with Miguel Long in the end zone pm a 20-yard touchdown pass to make it a 14-6 game following a failed two-point conversion.

The Dragons scored with 3:50 left in the game after a long pass to the one-yard line and then punching the ball across. But on Piedmont's next possession, the Highlanders churned downfield with long runs led by Ashton and Cash Panico, leading to Ashton powering his way on a five-yard carry across the goal line, shouldering his way over an attempted tackle. He also converted a two-point conversion to make it 22-14.

"It was great to be back out there. It wasn't the result we wanted, but we had a lot of fun," said Ashton.

But Piedmont wasn't done. On the ensuing kickoff, PHS recovered its onside kick on the right sideline to gain possession and be in great field position and with enough time to tie the game. But on a second down at the 30-yard line, Dicke quarterback suffered a shot to the ribs and had to leave the game. Its once promising drive ended at the 28-yard line.

"We caught them by surprise on the onside kick. Albert Bellingrath kicked the ball and Long went streaking down the sideline to get it. They executed their jobs perfectly," said Smet.

The JV team continues with three more scheduled games, at St. Patrick in Vallejo this Friday, October 21, at Tennyson in Haywards on Thursday, October 27, and at home against Kennedy on Friday, November 4.

**NEXT UP**

Piedmont (1-3) heads to St. Patrick in Vallejo on Friday, October 21 at 4:30 p.m.

# How Piedmont plans to push forward with football

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High School is pushing forward with Junior Varsity football after a tumultuous cancellation of the five varsity games remaining on its schedule. JV will continue, but due to a diminished roster and injuries, the varsity season was terminated following a game on September 23.

The JV team played its first game in three weeks on Friday, October 14, but there was no varsity game. Although JV head coach Bradley Smet, who also is the school's athletic director, was calling the offense. Varsity head coach Jordan Seiden has been taking the reins at practice.

"Once we decided to make the move with varsity, we talked about bringing our [varsity] staff down to JV and starting the transition for those players who will be getting varsity experience next year. We're getting them used to our system and expectations. We definitely want to run the same system on both levels (JV and varsity), so we're building the culture and a true program," said Seiden.

Defensive coordinator Mike Dixon called the plays in Friday's game and in future games, offensive coordinator Kerry Griffin will take control.

"The kids are using the same terminology and all those things, so we thought the natural progression would be for us to be working with JV as a unit. Our defensive coordinator is running the JV defense with assistance of the other coaches who were there. Mike Dixon is running the offense starting this week, last week with coach Smet," said Seiden.

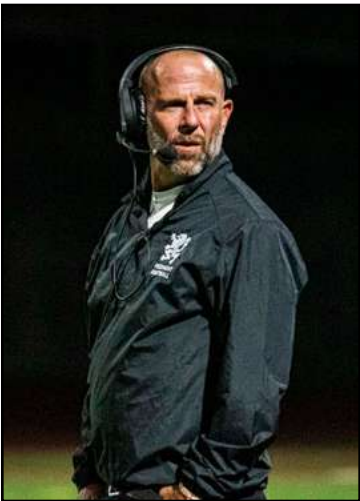
Most of Piedmont's varsity lineup included sophomores and juniors under Seiden, where a large focus of attention was developing players. That undoubtedly becomes an even greater emphasis going forward on JV, allowing Seiden to learn even more players to his incumbent varsity team in 2023.

"It's been nice having time to work with the team before playing O'Dowd. We are still going through the transition of getting to know each other, I tell the team that it's almost like starting over again. We have a chance to get a leg-up on next year by getting together this year. We're keeping the focus on developing and getting better; the focus of JV is more about developing and growth rather than wins and losses, said Seiden.

The JV roster has approximately 24 active players, which allows the team to rotate players on offense and defense and keep them fresh. The number of play-



Jordan Seiden and PHS Athletic Director Bradley Smet (back) talk with JV players during a timeout on Friday.



Staff Photos

**Piedmont head football coach Jordan Seiden discusses the future of the sport at the high school. The remaining five games of the season were canceled.**

ers also allows Piedmont to have its first 11-on-11 practices this season.

"We haven't had numbers in order to rotate players effectively. Guys aren't necessarily having to start both ways, while some guys who are in better shape who can handle it are able to play both ways more, it also allows some guys to play one way. We're able to sub guys out without there being a drop-off between players and have allowed us to go full 11-on-11 in practice," said Seiden.

The impact of COVID-19 was undoubtedly felt by the football program, which requires a large number of players. As PHS assistant coach Dick Carter wrote in last week's Post, "interest in football by middle school boys was not sufficiently cultivated in the recent years before 2020. As Seiden describes, Piedmont High is making efforts to get the middle school involved to invigorate the program.

"If kids are seeing the high school program struggle, what's the incentive? The head of the flag football program [Billy Goldstein] came by and said they have around 24 eighth grade kids who are playing football. We plan on coming by and talk to the team about the program, recruiting, summer ball, and opportunities they'll have when they come to the high school program," said Seiden.

Piedmont's JV team will play St. Patrick in Vallejo this Friday, October 21, travel to Hayward to play Tennyson on Thursday, October 27, and finish the season with a game at Witter Field with Kennedy of Richmond on Friday, November 4

"We're hoping for it to be an evening game, but we plan on having a Senior Night to honor the seniors who were on the team," said Seiden.