

Football team loses 56-35 to Pierce

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont's football team suffered a 56-35 loss to Pierce in Arbuckle on Friday, September 16. It was the team's third straight loss.

The Highlanders fought evenly with the Bears in the first half and went into halftime down by one touchdown, 28-21, but Pierce ate away at the Purple and White defense with continuous running plays to charge ahead in the second half on Piedmont's tired legs with a roster of only 17 players.

"We were going back-and-forth in the first half and just couldn't get any stops in the second half. We shot ourselves in the foot a couple of times, but we put up some good points and played hard," said coach Jordan Seiden.

"The battle with attrition is always going to be an issue for us. Our core group is great, but it's a lot to ask them to play all four quarter both ways. Pretty much every single player starts both ways. We ask a lot of them and they've been great about it."

The Bears rushed for over 500 yards and only attempted a few passes, accumulating 32 first downs on the night with successive long drives, including four of five fourth-down conversions.

"We did pretty good on third downs, but they converted multiple fourth downs," said Seiden. "They just ran the ball, but we did well stopping the inside run but lost discipline on a lot of outside runs," said Seiden.

Piedmont started the game off with a bang on a trick play when running back Jack Nelson took a sweep and tossed the ball to receiver Sam Shelby running a reverse. Shelby, who is the backup quarterback, pulled up to pass and hit Dominic Alexander wide open downfield for a 62-yard touchdown.

Pierce responded on its next series with a touchdown drive to make it 7-7. But the Highlanders were able to regain the lead on a 60-yard pass reception by Shelby. On the play, quarterback Markos Lagios connected with Shelby on an eight-yard button-hook. The receiver then shook off two defenders and raced down the sideline, making another two defenders whiff on tackles as he sped to the end zone.

Pierce scored the next two touchdowns with its Wing-T offense, churning out rushing yards on long drives to go ahead



Dominic Alexander scored twice against Pierce on pass receptions of 62 and 25 yard receptions.



Matteo Costa scored on an 86-yard kickoff return against Pierce.



Sam Shelby had a 62-yard touchdown pass on a trick play and also turned multiple defenders inside-out on a 60-yard touchdown reception.

21-14 in the early portion of the second quarter. But Piedmont answered with an 86-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by Matteo Costa to tie the game once more at 21-21

Pierce added one more touchdown before the half for a 28-21 lead, and Piedmont struggled to find productivity in the second half.

"I firmly appreciate the effort

they give for all four quarters. To ask them to play as much as they do, I have nothing but the utmost love for these players. But it can't be an excuse for the mental mistakes we make," said Seiden.

The Bears scored two more unanswered touchdowns in the third quarter to make it 42-21, but Nelson scored on another kickoff return making it 42-28. Alexander scored Piedmont's last touchdown on a 25-yard catch in the fourth quarter.

PHS had 221 passing yards, with Shelby's 62-yard strike and Lagios passing for two touchdowns, and an interception. Official stats were not provided.

The Highlanders look ahead to Friday's game against St. Mary's at Witter Field against former PHS head coach John Trotman. The Panthers are 3-0 this season, but have played against three winless teams.

"We need to come out and play our game. We have played three really good teams who have winning records and we played them all tough. Del Norte and Seaside are two strong teams who we played really tough, we just need to keep working," said Seiden.

NEXT UP

Piedmont (0-3) hosts St. Mary's on Friday, September 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Makenna Thiel, PHS Class of 2021, competes at Berkeley Tennis Club Women's Challenger

By Jonathan Comeaux

Makenna Thiel, the Post's Athlete of the Year in 2021, and 2019 as a sophomore, is currently on the University of California tennis team in Berkeley as a second-year student. Cal is the defending Pac-12 Champion,

Thiel powered through a busy summer competing at the professional level on the International Tennis Federation circuit and recently played in the Berkeley Tennis Club's Women's \$60,000 Challenger on Monday, September 19.

"For Makenna, coming out in these professional tournaments, I think she competes hard and competes well. This summer, she was able to compete a lot. We work on a lot of stuff put it into match play is the next piece," said Cal head coach Amanda Augustus.

The Berkeley Tennis Club's Women's Challenger often hosts several of the world's top-100 players. For instance, Sophia Kenin won the 2018 BTC Women's Challenger and later won the 2020 Australian Open.

Thiel lost in the first round of qualifying this past weekend to No. 16 seeded Alana Smith of North Carolina State by scores of 6-2, 6-3. Smith, 22, is a graduate student and earned an honorable mention for All-ACC in 2021 and 2019, to go along with All-American doubles selections in 2021, 2020, and 2019.

Smith is a tall player with a powerful serve. She recorded nine aces in Monday's match.

"This was my first hard court match in a bit over a month. It's a big stage on center court at my former home club," noted Thiel. "She had a really good serve and I knew I had to stay on her and focus a bit more on my service games. I think my first-serve percentage, especially in the first set, could've been better. I now know what I need to work on," she added.

Since Cal won the Pac-12 tennis title in April, Thiel made the second round of the W15 San Diego qualifying draw in June, made the first round main draw of another W15 tournament in San Diego later that month, made the second round of qualifying at a W15 Los Angeles tournament in July, and made the first round of the W15 Fountain Valley main draw in July. She reached the third round of W15 Lakewood in July, and was in the first round of



Staff Photos

Makenna Thiel, PHS Class of 2021, competed at the Berkeley Tennis Club \$60,000 Women's Challenger this week.

qualifying for the W15 Frederiksberg tournament in Denmark last month.

"I played a total of six pro tournaments this summer and that actually helped me get into the Berkeley Challenger with the points that I got. The atmosphere in pro level tournaments seems like it would be a lot different, but when you get there, you just stay focused and do your own thing. There are a lot more matches at the pro-level, but you see a lot of familiar faces from juniors, so it's the same in a way," said Thiel,

Coach Augustus had high praise of Thiel and is eager to watch her development after a full year on the California roster.

"She's got about a week until our first college tournament of the season at our home courts. I'm just looking forward to seeing Makenna make the jump this year. Playing at the collegiate level is an adjustment. I think she knows what's coming. I think she'll be prepared for her opportunities. The fall is really great because they play at the same tournaments and everyone has an opportunity to earn spots in the lineup. I think that's her big goal this fall," said Augustus.

California's season starts with its Fall Invitational on September 30. The season stretches through the Fall, Winter, and concludes in late April at the Pac-12 Championship.

"The training has been really good. We've been working a lot on our fitness," said Thiel. "I definitely feel a lot stronger and my teammates are excellent hitting partners, I get good practice every single day. I definitely feel like I've improved."



Makenna Thiel is entering her sophomore year at season at the University of California.



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