SPORTS

Highlanders shut out Berkeley 33-0

Defense forces 2 interceptions, 8 tackles for loss

By Jonathan Comeaux

Last Friday, April 5, marked a day of validation for the Piedmont High football team. Playing on the road at Berkeley High, the Highlanders utterly shut down the Yellowjackets 33-0 and remain undefeated with two games left in the season

Last season Piedmont lost to Berkeley 31-6 in a season with a 3-7 record. This year, Piedmont has allowed only seven points in the last two games, outscoring the opposition 75-7 after defeating Mt. Eden 42-7 the previous week.

"We didn't expect the turnaround to happen this quickly," said 2nd year PHS coach Jerome Johnson.

'We knew we'd play well this year and kids have been buying into the system, but we thought these last two games in particular would be a bit tighter. We knew Berkeley was an athletic team, but tonight we got a goose-egg,"

The Highlanders' defense

wreaked havoc, yet again, holding the Yellowjackets to negative 21 rushing yards and 19 passing yards – a total of two negative yards for the game.

"I couldn't ask anything better for our game preparation with [defensive coordinator] Ryan Porter. Berkeley came with an air-assault style and tried to run a lot of seams and go-routes, but we were prepared for all of it," added Johnson.

The squad had eight tackles for loss from six different players to go along with quarterback sacks by defensive linemen Andy Melian and Mason Kimball. The defensive secondary, meanwhile, recorded interceptions by Nate Guzdar and J.D. Harrison in the second half. Both turnovers led to points.

Our coaches are doing a great job of preparing us, we're never surprised. We're getting to the ball quickly and pursuing, getting all heads to the ball. We knew their plays before they were



Photos by Todd Marshburn

The Highlanders' defense held Berkeley's offense to negative two yards, with eight tackles for loss, two QB sacks, and two interceptions. Pictured are Joe Hempeck (30), Trevor Thayer (50), Jake Youkstetter (6), and Nate Guzdar (7).

coming," said senior linebacker Jet Moxley, who had five total tackles, one for a loss of yards.

The game started slowly, and by halftime, Piedmont had a modest 7-0 lead.

Brian Cain dragged a helpless defender across the goal line for two-yard score midway through the second quarter. He finished the day with 102 rushing yards and three touchdowns.

PHS put up some quick scores in the second half while holding the Yellowjackets scoreless. Receiver Alex Hilton scored on a 56-yard touchdown pass from Tommy McNeil on the second play after halftime, in which Hilton shrugged off Berkeley's safety to reel in the reception and sprint to the end zone.

Hilton missed most of the football season as a junior due to injury, and this year with the convoluted sports schedule due to Covid, had to choose between baseball and football.

"It definitely was a big game," he said. "it's my first game back and first game of my senior year. It was such a fun game to come back to."

Piedmont's defense forced a turnover on downs at Berkeley's 19-yard line with 8:43 left in the third period, then required just one play to score. McNeil found Moxley on a post-route for a score.

McNeil was spot-on in the game with 116 yards, two touchdowns, and five-of-eight pass completions.

Guzdar nabbed an interception at 6:54 in the third quarter, leading to Cain scoring on a 13-yard sweep. He made three tacklers miss in the process, giving Piedmont a 26-0 lead after a failed two-point conversion.

Berkeley's next possession led to another interception when Cain tipped a pass to a conveniently positioned A.J. Harrison with 6:22 left in the third.

The Highlanders scored their final points with a 1-yard run by Cain in the first minute of the game.

Final stats include Cain's 102 yards, three touchdowns, and a long of 26 yards. McNeil completed five passes for 116 yards and two touchdowns. Hilton had two receptions for 63 yards and a

Moxley had five tackles, one for loss, and one touchdown reception. Melian had three tackles, two for loss, and a sack. Kimball had two tackles, one sack. Jordan Bowers had a tackle for a loss. Jack Yousktetter had two tackles for loss and a deflected pass. Guzdar had a tackle for loss, a pass deflected, and an interception. Harrison also had an interception.

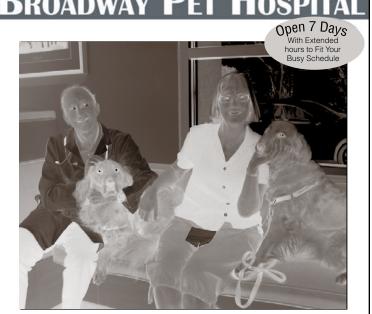
NEXT UP

Piedmont (3-0) travels to Fremont to play Washington High this Saturday, April 10 at 1:00 p.m.



Senior receiver Alex Hilton had a 56-yard touchdown reception after

Nate Guzdar intercepts a pass against Berkeley.



Dr. Gutlaizer and Sandy with Sasha and Morgan.

Sandy Olsen and her Golden Retrievers, Sasha and Morgan

We are big fans of Dr. Gutlaizer and Broadway Pet Hospital. They take care of us as well as our canine foster pals from Norcal Golden Retriever Rescue. Broadway Pet Hospital is the best! Plus, Morgan gets his beauty treatments there as well.

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PIEDMONT SPORTS SCHEDULE

Some events subject to change. (Revised - 3/24/21)

Date	Day	Sport	Opponent	Loc.	Var.	JV.
Apr. 7	Wed.	TRACK	NorCal Meet at Alhambra (Martinez)	A	7:30	7:30
-		TEN-B	University (San Francisco)	A/H	3:30	3:30
		BASE	Encinal	A/H	4:00	4:00
		LAX	Berkeley	Α	7:00	5:30
Apr. 9	Fri.	BASE	Encinal	Н	4:00	
		SOFT	Encinal (Alameda)	A	3:30	
		TEN-G	Miramonte (Orinda)	A/H	3:30	3:30
Apr. 10	Sat.	BASE	Castro Valley	Н	2:00	
		XC	WACC Championship – Hayward HS	Α	8:30	8:30
		FB	Washington (Fremont)	Α	4:30	
Apr. 13	Tues.	TRACK	WACC Novice Invitational	Н	2:00	2:00
Apr. 14	Wed.	SOFT	Hayward	Н	3:30	
-		BASE	San Lorenzo	Н	4:00	

H = Home

TEN-G = Girls' Tennis TRACK = Track & Field

FB = Footbal

A = AwayTEN-B = Boys' Tennis XC = Cross Country

BASE = Baseball

LAX-G = Girls' Lacrosse

SOFT = Softball