

Flag football drops opener to St. Mary's

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High's flag football team opened up its season with a 27-6 loss to St. Mary's on Thursday, August 28 at Witter Field. Despite the loss, there were still bright spots as Piedmont adjusts to the sport's new rules.

"That was the best loss we ever had. We started out focused and they adjusted. As the game went on, we were still energized and excited about how we played. Of course, you want to win, but we're still feeling very positive," said coach Beth Black.

Sophomore quarterback Edie Elmquist did well, using her speed to break the pocket for rushing yards, while also finding open targets when rolling out.

"Edie was phenomenal on the run; she's utilizing her speed. She knows every route and has the confidence to dance back there. She's showing confidence," Black said.

Senior safety Dahlia Osman also made an impact, recording two interceptions, including one in the end zone.

"Dahlia is Dahlia; she's a force back there," Black said.

Piedmont scored the final touchdown of the game when Malia Williams ran the ball 25



Staff Photos

Edie Elmquist lines up for a pass in Piedmont's second opener against St. Mary's.

yards into the end zone.

Black discussed some of the work that needs to be done.

"We're going to work on flag pulling from the outside hip. We want to work on screen blocking, and just building more connections on the field," Black said.

The Highlanders look ahead to hosting Miramonte tomorrow, Thursday, September 4. Five days later, PHS opens its league schedule in the Shoreline Division of the Western Alameda County Conference against Tennyson on September 9.

Game Recap

After Piedmont went three-and-out on the first possession, Saint Mary's drove 43 yards on three plays to go up 6-0 with 8:40 left in the first quarter following a failed extra point conversion. On the next drive, Elmquist had a completion to Cory Minor while Elmquist also broke runs of five and 12 yards. However, PHS elected to punt on 4th-and-5 at their 35 yard line.

After two trades of possession, Saint Mary's drove to the 21 yard line, but Osman thwarted their series by nabbing an interception.

The Panthers got the ball back with 11:15 to go in the second quarter, driving 33 yards to the end zone—making it 13-0 with 7:22 left. Piedmont's next drive featured a 15 yard reception by Kaylani Spieckerman and a 10 yard carry by Elmquist, but the drive stalled out two yards past midfield at the St. Mary's 38 with 26 seconds left in the half.

In the third quarter, Osman had a critical takeaway by grabbing her second interception, this time jumping a route in the end zone with 4:34 on the clock. However, Piedmont's offense punted after three plays, leading to another St. Mary's score with 39 seconds left—19-0. The Panthers later forced a safety in the fourth quarter with 6:52 remaining in the game, 21-0.

Piedmont got on the board late after just three plays. It featured Anjali Bowers recording a nine yard reception before Williams took a carry 25 yards to the house.



Dahlia Osman makes one of her two interceptions.



Piedmont celebrates Malia Williams' (middle) touchdown.

Cross-Country team opens season this week



Photos by Jenni Tsoi

Leighton Mand, the Post's Sophomore of the Year in 2024 is back for her junior season.

By Jonathan Comeaux

Piedmont High's cross-country team returns to action this week at St. Mary's College in Moraga on Saturday, September 6 at the St. Mary's Invitational. They'll compete with 31 other schools, with many teams from the North Coast Section.

It's shaping up to be a potentially strong season for the girls' squad, led by returning runners, Leighton Mand and Amalia Gray. Both reached last year's CIF State Championship.

The Post named Mand its 2025 Sophomore of the Year following her cross country and track campaigns. She finished 74th of 201 athletes at the State Championship, while she was sixth of 127 at the NCS Championship.

"Leighton is a cornerstone runner of the girls' team. She's consistent and competitive. She wants to work hard and race hard. She's also shown she can look out for other members of the team," coach Steve Zirkelbach said.

Gray was among last year's breakout stars as a sophomore as well. She was 101st at State and finished 14th at NCS.

Alongside Gray and Mand, Piedmont has a very strong group of eight runners who could all make an impact. Skylar Best enters her senior year, while sophomores Viviane Oesterer and Nikita Gorelik also made an impact in their debut in 2024.

Senior Cora Chun, senior Mara Kemp-Malone, and junior

Cora Brozowski Schrader are three runners who should help.

"Skylar is a senior and one of our captains and Amalia went to the State meet last year. Viviane is a sophomore and was one of our top runners last year at the WACC Championship and North Coast. Cora Chun is another senior captain, Cora Brozowski Schrader is looking strong as well. Nikita had a really strong track season, I'm looking forward to her being in the running," Zirkelbach said.

In total, Zirkelbach sees a girls' group who could potentially make it to State if all goes well.

"The girls look very promising if everyone can stay healthy. They have a shot to possibly make it to the State meet," Zirkelbach.

The boys' will have to go much of the season without star runner Sebastien Swain, who underwent surgery over the off-season on a lingering injury. He was our 2025 honorable mention for Athlete of the Year. the Post's first boys' sophomore to do so.

Zirkelbach is hopeful Swain can recover in time for the 2025 Western Alameda County Conference Championship near the end of the season.

"Sebastien had surgery early in the summer. He's back doing easy rehabilitation running. He's easing back into it, and we're hoping he can be back by the WACC Championship," Zirkelbach said.

Zirkelbach named junior Alex Schleuning as someone who is doing well, and senior Noah Sohn

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PIEDMONT SPORTS SCHEDULE

Some events subject to change. (Revised - 9/3/25)

Date	Day	Sport	Opponent	Loc.	Var.	JV.
Sep. 3	Wed.	TEN	Campolindo	A	3:30	-----
		GG	Castro Valley	A	3:30	3:30
Sep. 4	Thurs.	TEN	Marin Academy			
			at Dominican University, San Rafael	A/H	3:30	3:30
		VB	Hayward	A	5:30	6:30
		FF	Miramonte (Orinda)	A	7:30	6:15
Sep. 5	Fri.	WP-G	Mission San Jose at Newark HS	A	6:00	-----
		FB	Middletown	A	7:00	4:00
Sep. 6	Sat.	XC	St. Mary's Invitational (Moraga)	A	8:30	-----
		WP-G	American Cougar Classic (Newark HS)	A	9:00	-----
Sep. 9	Tues.	TEN	San Leandro	A	3:30	-----
		VB	Urban (San Francisco)	A	5:45	4:30
		FF	Tennyson	H	7:30	6:15
Sep. 10	Wed.	TEN	Acalanes	A/H	3:30	3:30
		WP-B	San Marin (Novato)	A	TBD	-----

KEY:

H = Home

FB = Football

VB = Girls' Volleyball

A = Away

GG = Girls' Golf

WP-B = Boys' Water Polo

XC = Cross Country

TEN = Girls' Tennis

WP-G = Girls' Water Polo



Amalia Gray was a breakout star as a sophomore, reaching last year's CIF State Championship.



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