

Dolphins Outscore Venice in League Showdown

By **Steve Galluzzo** - October 16, 2025



Quarterback Jack Thomas throws one of his five touchdown passes in the Dolphins' 56-54 victory at Venice.

Photos by Steve Galluzzo

By STEVE GALLUZZO | *Sports Editor*

“Don’t let up!”

That was the message Palisades Charter High School football coach Dylen Smith had for his players minutes after the Friday, October 10, 56-54 triumph over Venice.

In a back-and-forth affair that saw the lead change hands seven times, it took an interception by Enzo Allen with 10 seconds left to finally subdue the host Gondoliers, who won last year’s encounter 45-44 at Stadium by the Sea.

The 59th meeting between the schools was one of the best in the rivalry’s storied history, which started the year Pali High opened in 1961. Smith can now claim two victories in three tries, having led his team to a 28-24 victory on the same field in 2023—a win that secured the Western League title.

It was a night to remember for senior quarterback Jack Thomas, who made one big play after another and finished with a career-high 473 yards and five touchdowns. Afterward, he still saw room for improvement.

“I’ve got to play better—we came up empty on five drives and that’s on me,” he said after completing 25 of 43 passes. “The defense made some big stops. We expected it to be a shootout.”



Harrison Carter runs for a first down in the first half. He rushed for two scores and caught a touchdown pass.

Thomas also ran for 52 yards, using his legs to buy time for receivers to get open downfield or scrambling out of the pocket to keep drives alive. He did just that in the final minute of the first half when he sidestepped a blitz, then launched a 75-yard touchdown pass to Demare Dezeurn to pull the visiting Dolphins to within 28-27.

Dezeurn, who transferred from Alemany over the summer, also caught a 33-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter and a one-yard touchdown pass with 6:35 left in the game that proved to be the decisive score. The junior receiver/defensive back also returned an interception 48 yards for a touchdown to put the Dolphins ahead for good midway through the third quarter. He had seven receptions for 151 yards.

Palisades scored 22 unanswered points in the third quarter to build a 49-35 advantage, but the Gondoliers got back-to-back touchdowns to pull within two points early in the fourth quarter.

Harrison Carter carried 16 times for 71 yards and scored on runs of 14 and 10 yards in the first half. He also had four receptions for 116 yards, including a seven-yard touchdown catch that gave the Dolphins a 14-point lead with five seconds left in the third quarter. Malachi Ross had 10 catches for 154 yards, including a seven-yard scoring grab for Palisades’ first points of the second half.

The schools have split the last six league titles, and Friday’s win moved the Dolphins (7-0, 2-0) into sole possession of first place with three games left. Palisades crept closer to leveling the head-to-head series but for now Venice still has a narrow 31-27-1 lead.

Bennett Dome completed 24 of 39 passes for 373 yards and three touchdowns and ran for another score for Venice (3-4, 1-1) but was intercepted three times, the first by Tavian Talbert at the Dolphins’ 38 late in the first quarter.

Aaron Minter caught 13 passes for 248 yards—including touchdown grabs of 10 and 63 yards for Venice, while Joshua Aaron rushed 20 times for 151 yards and four touchdowns, the last from 10 yards out that cut the

Dolphins' lead to 56-54 with 4:02 left.

Palisades drove from its own 20 to the Venice 15 before a fourth-down pass was incomplete with 59 seconds left, giving the ball back to the Gondoliers, who marched to their own 40 in four plays before a pass got tipped past the line of scrimmage and grabbed by Allen near midfield. Having already used its three timeouts, Venice could not stop the clock and with the offense lined up in victory formation, Thomas took a knee to let the final seconds tick off.



Palisades teammates congratulate Enzo Allen on his game-clinching interception with 10 seconds remaining.

Palisades, which plays University on homecoming Friday, October 17, at Santa Monica College, stayed on track for an Open Division playoff berth as one of the top eight teams in the City Section.

“We have to keep getting better,” said Thomas, who has 2,196 yards through the air with 28 touchdowns, two interceptions and a 138.7 quarterback rating this season. “Open is no joke.”

Augie Evans paced the defense with 12 tackles. Allen had 11, Skyler Walters had 10, and Talbert had eight tackles and two pass deflections. Carter Schwartz continued his reliable kicking, booming one of his kickoffs into the end zone for a touchback, placing three punts inside the 20 and converting six of seven extra point tries.

“I’m proud of everyone—this is a huge win,” Smith said. “We have to keep working and it starts with practice on Monday.”

The Palisades-Venice winner went on to capture eight of the last 10 league titles. If the Dolphins are victors in their last three games they will continue that trend.

Year	Result	Champion
2025	Palisades 56, Venice 54	TBD
2024	Venice 45, Palisades 44	Venice
2023	Palisades 28, Venice 24	Palisades
2022	Venice 60, Palisades 14	Venice
2021	Palisades 33, Venice 13	Palisades
2020	Venice 36, Palisades 0	Venice
2019	Palisades 38, Venice 14	Palisades
2018	Palisades 24, Venice 17	Fairfax
2017	Venice 34, Palisades 28	Fairfax
2016	Palisades 14, Venice 7	Three-way tie
2015	Venice 42, Palisades 13	Venice