

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Palisades goes to the ground to start comeback win over Mary Star of the Sea



Palisades receiver Go Moriya makes a sliding catch in the second half of Friday night's 35-28 intersectional win. (Steve Galluzzo / For The Times)

By Steve Galluzzo

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Trailing at halftime for the first time all season, Palisades faced its toughest test so far and passed with flying colors to stay unbeaten Friday night in San Pedro.

Seeing his potent passing attack sputtering, coach Dylon Smith switched to the ground game in the second half and the Dolphins overcame a 13-point deficit to pull out a 35-28 intersectional victory over host Mary Star of the Sea.

“My message at halftime was we need to run the ball and we don’t need to win the game on one pass,” said Smith, who piloted Palisades to the City Section Division I final last fall. “We finally had a collective effort in the fourth quarter, Harrison Carter ran hard and the defense made stops when it needed to.”

Carter caught a 25-yard touchdown pass from Jack Thomas for the first points of the second half and later took a pitch around left end for a 50-yard score that cut the Dolphins’ deficit to 28-21 with 5:47 left in the third quarter.

After drawing double coverage and being held to one catch through three and a half quarters, star receiver Demare Dezeurn caught two touchdown passes with less than six minutes left, the second a juggling 46-yarder for the go-ahead score with 1:21 remaining.

On its ensuing drive Mary Star marched to Palisades’ 20, but Carter broke up a pass in the flat on fourth and 10 with 12 seconds left to seal the win.

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Johnny Rivera scores the first of his four touchdowns runs for Mary Star of the Sea against Palisades. (Steve Galluzzo / For The Times)

Thomas, who entered the game having thrown for 1,304 yards and 17 touchdowns without an interception, was held to 17 yards passing in the first half but finished nine of 16 for 123 yards and four touchdowns.

Carter rushed for 123 yards and caught three passes for 40 yards for the Dolphins (5-0), who are third in The Times' City Section rankings behind Birmingham and Carson,

Johnny Rivera rushed 40 times for 217 yards and four touchdowns for the Stars (3-2), who led 20-7 at halftime and 28-21 entering the fourth quarter.

Palisades begins Western League action next Friday at Westchester while the Stars host St. Genevieve in their Camino Real League opener the same night.