

Palisades quarterback Jack Thomas leads his team to high-scoring victory over Venice



Palisades quarterback Jack Thomas lofts a pass over Venice rusher Jonathan Sharp in the first half Friday night. (Steve Galluzzo / For The Times)

By Steve Galluzzo

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Despite throwing five touchdown passes to lead his team to a 56-54 victory over Venice on Friday night, Palisades quarterback Jack Thomas was hardly satisfied.

“I’ve got to play better — we came up empty on five drives and that’s on me,” the senior said after completing 25 of 42 passes for a career-high 460 yards. “The defense made some big stops. We expected it to be a shootout.”

The teams traded scores throughout a wild first half that saw six lead changes and ended with the Gondoliers on top 28-27 despite Demare Dezeurn’s 75-yard touchdown catch with 42 seconds left in the second quarter.

“I didn’t think it could get better than last year,” Thomas said of his receiving corps, which now includes Dezeurn, a transfer from Bishop Alemany. “We’ve got a lot of guys who can make plays, so I want to pass first, that’s my priority.”

Dezeurn had seven receptions for 156 yards and three touchdowns and scored on a 55-yard interception return to put Palisades ahead 42-35 midway through the third quarter. He has a team-best 12 scoring catches and four interceptions, two of them for touchdowns.

Harrison Carter scored on runs of 14 and 10 yards in the first half and added a seven-yard touchdown catch to give the Dolphins a 14-point lead heading into the fourth quarter. Malachi Ross added 10 catches for 141 yards and a score.



Venice quarterback Bennett Dome scores on a four-yard keeper to give the Gondoliers a 28-21 lead in the second quarter Friday. (

Steve Galluzzo / For The Times)

Bennett Dome completed 19 of 35 passes for 288 yards and three touchdowns and ran for another score for Venice (3-4, 1-1, No. 9 in The Times' City Section rankings), but had three passes intercepted, the last by middle linebacker Enzo Allen at Palisades' 45 with 10 seconds left that sealed the result.

Joshua Aaron ran for 170 yards and four touchdowns and Aaron Minter caught touchdown passes of 10 and 63 yards for the Gondoliers, who hold a 31-27-1 edge in a rivalry that began in 1961, the year Palisades opened.

The schools have split the last six Western League titles and with Friday's win, the Dolphins (7-0, 2-0, No. 3 in The Times' City Section rankings), moved into sole possession of first place with three games left.

Thomas accounted for all six of his team's touchdowns (four passing and two running) during last season's matchup, which produced five ties and four lead

changes before the Gondoliers prevailed 45-44 when Palisades missed a last-second field goal. The Dolphins went on to set a school record for points in a season and reached the Division I championship game. This fall, they are on track for the Open Division.

“We have to keep getting better,” said Thomas, who upped his season total to 28 touchdowns with only two interceptions. “Open is no joke.”



Palisades teammates congratulate Enzo Allen after his game-clinching interception near midfield with 10 seconds remaining Friday night. (Steve Galluzzo / For The Times)



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