



## Sea Kings fight for win against West High

By Nick Ingram Special to the News  
Thursday, November 3, 2011 1:43 PM PDT

After the defense allowed an average of seven points per game over its last five games, the Palos Verdes High School football team was pushed to the limit last Friday night against host West Torrance High School.

“We knew West Torrance was going to come and play hard,” coach Guy Gardner said. “They are fighting for any spot in the playoffs, and this is a tough league.”

The Sea Kings took an early 14-0 lead and went into halftime up 21-6, but the Warriors fought back, making it a 35-28 game with 8:47 left in regulation.

Things looked to take a turn for the worst as PV High senior quarterback Zack Fixen was intercepted in the end zone with 4:26 left on the clock.

But Barry Thomas, the Warrior defensive back who snagged the interception, went out of the end zone before coming back in, giving the Sea Kings a safety and a 37-28 Bay League victory.

“I was angry I threw the interception,” Fixen said. “But in the end, it worked out OK.”

Fixen put PV High (6-2, 3-0) on the board first, finding the end zone on a 1-yard quarterback sneak 31/2 minutes into the first quarter, two plays after fellow senior Zach Henkaus put the Sea Kings in scoring position with a 43-yard run that ended with a facemask penalty on the defense, spotting the ball at the 3, one play before Fixen’s touchdown run.

The defense proceeded to shut down the Warriors (4-4, 0-3) quick-paced offense, holding it to 135 yards in the first half, a week after scoring 38 points and putting up nearly 400 yards in a 45-38 loss to Redondo Union High School.

“They’ve been a good passing offense the entire season,” Kolanz said. “It was surprising they had so much success, they are a good team, and \[Joey\] Notch is a good quarterback.”

Senior Carl Aguirre added a 6-yard touchdown run with 11:53 left in the first half, just before West Torrance High cracked the scoreboard. Aguirre finished with 30 yards on 10 carries.

It looked as though PV High was ready to run away with this contest, as Fixen found senior Robby Kolanz on a 41-yard passing play, giving the Sea Kings a 21-6 lead with 5:47 remaining in the half.

“As a receiver, you’re taught to run with your eyes open big and make your break late on the ball,” Kolanz said. “You don’t want the defensive back to get their hand in the way. It was a perfect pass by \[Fixen\].”

The Warriors came out of halftime on a mission, scoring on a 57-yard pass play from Notch to receiver Nick Roos before converting the two-point attempt, making it a 21-14 game.

But the Sea Kings went blow for blow, marching downfield on the ensuing possession and retaking the 14-point lead, this time with Fixen finding senior Lateef Munir on a 9-yard corner route, giving PV High a 28-14 lead.

“I’ve been banged up a lot of the season,” Munir said. “To get out there and play for my brothers, and be a part of the offense, it felt really good.”

After three turnovers on four plays, PV High got the ball back after senior Jake Macer’s interception, setting up the Sea King offense at the 7-yard line before Fixen found the end zone again on a 1-yard quarterback sneak, this time giving the Sea Kings a 35-14 lead.

Once again, the Warriors stormed back, driving 73 yards on 11 plays before Notch found Sam Choi on a 14-yard pass play, making it a 35-21 ballgame with 2:54 left in the third quarter.

The Sea Kings marched back downfield again, but were unable to convert a red zone possession into points, as the 20-yard field goal attempt sailed wide left, giving the ball back to West Torrance High.

“We knew they were going to disguise their defense all night and did a good job of that,” Fixen said. “I knew I had to trust my offensive line and trust my receivers would get open.”

Yet again, the Warriors drove downfield. This time, Notch found Craig Knaus behind the defense for a 31-yard touchdown, cutting the Sea Kings lead to 7 with 8:47 remaining in the game. Notch completed 19 of 41 passes for 273 yards.

Receiving the ball one more time, PV High proceeded to drive downfield, and the play after junior Dean Alessi’s wide receiver pass fell just short, Fixen was picked off by Thomas, just before Kolanz got Thomas for the safety.

“\[The safety\] definitely was a relief,” Kolanz, who finished with 64 yards on two catches, said. “I couldn’t believe it, but I was happy the officials called a safety.”

Fixen completed 10 of his 15 passes for 171 yards, while senior Salvatore Vitale led all running backs with 53 yards on 11 carries. Henkaus, who left the game with concussion-like symptoms in the second half, gained 48 yards on five carries on the Sea Kings opening drive.

With the victory, the Sea Kings set up a week nine matchup with Redondo Union High School (4-4, 3-0) that holds major implications on who may be the Bay League champion. Last week, Redondo Union High defeated Leuzinger High School 57-13.

*Nick Ingram is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor of the News.*



The Palos Verdes high school football team has been anchored by a superb offensive line. Left to Right, Andrew Bucklin, John Bulaich, Patrick Scoggins, Parker Allison, Koa Long, Grant Gressly, and captain Chase Eldridge. Robert Casillas/Staff Photographer