



SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

2025 VARSITY FOOTBALL GAME NOTES

2 State Championships

1997 Division II
2011 Division I

3 CIF-Southern Section Championships

1996 Division V
1997 Division V
2011 PAC-5

29 CIF-Southern Section Playoff Appearances

1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998,
1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007,
2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017 2019, 2021 (Fall),
2022, 2023 & 2024

4 League Championships

1996, 1997, 2000 & 2001

37th Varsity Season

Overall Record: 251-157-3 (.614)
Home: 138-69-3 (.664)
Road: 113-88-0 (.562)

9 Nationally-Ranked Teams

1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2011,
2012, 2017, 2024 & 2025

Program Retired Number Honorees: 2 – Minna | 3 – Palmer | 4 – Newman / Stanton | 54 – Frost | 82 – Minardi

2022 California High School Football Hall of Fame Inductees: Carson Palmer (Quarterback) & Harry Welch (Head Coach)

1 Heisman Trophy Winner • 1 Johnny Unitas Award Winner • 1 Outland Trophy Winner • 1 NFL Walter Peyton "Man of the Year" Award Winner • 3 Elite 11 Quarterbacks • HSRatings.com No. 10 Most Dominant Prep Football Program in California: 2001-2024

★ 2024-25 No. 1 California High School for "Overall Outstanding Athletic Excellence" - Cal-Hi Sports and MaxPreps.com ★

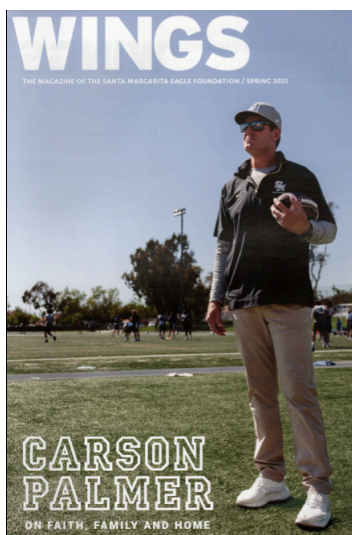


Mission Viejo Diablos (0-0) Santa Margarita Catholic Eagles (0-0)

Trabuco Hills Stadium
Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)
Friday, August 22, 2025 • 7:00 p.m.



HEAD COACH CARSON PALMER - THE PROCESS FOR SUCCESS



Thursday, December 12, the new era of Santa Margarita Catholic High School (SMCHS) football commenced. School president Andy Sulick announced that class of 1998 alum Carson Palmer was the football program's new head coach. The most notable words from Sulick's press release were "His football pedigree is unmatched. As an alum he understands the culture." This resonated among the alumni, school, local community and fans. The buzz for the beginning of the season hasn't been at this elevation since the Harry Welch championship era of the late 2010s.

After eight-months, Coach Carson Palmer's rich and abundant experience at the high school, collegiate and professional levels is contributing to the growth and success of the SMCHS football program.

Those months witnessed Palmer building a product that not only emphasizes superior athletic performance but also academic success, character development and deeper Christian faith for its participants. This is achieved with an approach of solid work ethic, discipline and perseverance -- a return to the above-mentioned "Eagle Culture" that existed in the decade of the 1990s and into the 2000s.



In the late-1980s, SMCHS's Vice President of Athletics, Jim Hartigan, was one of the school's founding staff members. Over the span of his 40-year career working with high school athletes, his passion has been to build a cohesive team and a culture of grit, trust, perseverance and love. This was proven to inspire, grow and motivate athletes with a commitment to academic excellence and integrity.


Coincidentally, Palmer was quarterback at the helm of Hartigan's most triumphant clubs, in the late-1990s. Palmer forged his leadership ability and sharpened the talent he was blessed with in that period. Palmer is now the architect -- drawing key ingredients from the old, timeless recipe.

GRIT: Core Framework of Values and Road to Success

- Growth
- Resilience
- Integrity
- Team First

Palmer's coaching style and preparation methods are comparable to many of the highly successful coaches he played for along the way. That list includes Pete Carroll, Norm Chow and Steve Sarkisian at USC and Hue Jackson at USC and with the Oakland Raiders and Bruce Arians with the Arizona Cardinals. All mentioned are considered are deeply respected, great football minds and effective teachers. Palmer will recycle both the high points and introduce own spins.

	All-Time Season Opening Game Record 37th Season of Santa Margarita Catholic Football	
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SMCHS All-Time Opening Games	Record	 National High School Football Game of the Week
Overall Season Opening Games	26-9-1 (.736)	
Home Opening Games - All	24-10-1 (.700)	
Road Opening Games - All	25-11-0 (.694)	

CURRENT COMPOSITE POLL RANKINGS




Los Angeles Times REGISTER
THE ORANGE COUNTY








The Sporting News
EST 1886



- Nation
- California
- CIF-Southern Section - Overall
- CIF-Southern Section - Division 1
- Los Angeles Metro




Media Outlet	Coverage Area	Poll Rank
Orange County Register / ocregister.com	Orange County	3
The Los Angeles Times / latimes.com	Los Angeles Metro	7
	Orange County	4
Cal-Hi Sports / calhisports.com	California	Not released
	CIF-Southern Section	Not released
HS Ratings / hsratings.com Formerly Cal Preps / calpreps.com	Nation	8
	California	4
	CIF-Southern Section	4
MaxPreps.com (PlayOn! Sports / NFHS Network)	Nation - Composite	25
	Nation - Computer	16
	California	5
si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive.com Sports Illustrated High School	Nation	16
	Southwest Region	5
	California	8
	CIF-Southern Section	5
Massey Ratings / On3.com / rivals	Nation	24
	California - Composite	5
	California - Massy	6
High School Football America (HSFA) / NFL Play Football highschoolfootballamerica.com / flofootball.com	Nation	27
	California	6
The Sporting News High School / sportingnews.com	Nation	Not ranked
	California	Not released

	CIF-Southern Section	Not released
ESPN SC Next / espn.com	Nation	Not ranked
USA Today High School Sports / usatodayhss.com	Nation	Not ranked

ANALYTICAL INFORMATION – SCHEDULE STRENGTH / OPPONENTS



2025 National Schedule Strength Difficulty Ratings

School (Location)	Schedule Mark	HSRatings
Orange Lutheran (Orange)	73.5	1
Santa Margarita Catholic	72.5	2
JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano)	69.6	3
Servite (Anaheim)	66.7	4
Mater Dei (Santa Ana)	63.8	5
St. John Bosco (Bellflower)	61.1	6
Centennial (Corona)	50.2	7
Mission Viejo	49.8	8
IMG Academy (Bradenton, Florida)	49.2	9
First Academy (Orlando, Florida)	48.8	10
St. Frances Academy (Baltimore, Maryland)	46.2	11
Sierra Canyon (Chatsworth)	43.5	12
American Heritage (Plantation, Florida)	42.8	13
San Clemente	42.1	15

2025 California Schedule Strength Difficulty Ratings

School (Location)	Schedule Mark	HSRatings
Orange Lutheran (Orange)	73.5	1
Santa Margarita Catholic	72.5	2
JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano)	69.6	3
Servite (Anaheim)	66.7	4
Mater Dei (Santa Ana)	63.8	5
St. John Bosco (Bellflower)	61.1	6
Centennial (Corona)	50.2	7
Mission Viejo	49.8	8
Sierra Canyon (Chatsworth)	43.5	9
San Clemente	42.1	10

2025 Trinity League Schedule Strength Difficulty Ratings

School (Location)	Schedule Mark	HSRatings
Orange Lutheran (Orange)	73.5	1
Santa Margarita Catholic	72.5	2
JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano)	69.6	3
Servite (Anaheim)	66.7	4
Mater Dei (Santa Ana)	63.8	5
St. John Bosco (Bellflower)	61.1	6



MaxPreps.com: Top 10 Toughest High School Football Schedules for 2025

Ranked No. 16 in the Preseason MaxPreps Top 25, Santa Margarita Catholic heads into the 2025 high school football season with the toughest schedule in the country. In Carson Palmer's first season as head coach, nine of 10 opponents are included in our expanded Top 100 rankings. The Eagles have five games against nationally-ranked opponents -- No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana), No. 2 St. John Bosco (Bellflower), No. 3 Bishop Gorman (Las Vegas), No. 12 Centennial (Corona) and No. 14 Mission Viejo. The composite 2025 Santa Margarita Catholic opponent records in 2024 was 108-34 - 76.1 winning percentage.

1. **Santa Margarita Catholic**
2. Mater Dei
3. St. Frances Academy (Baltimore, Maryland)
4. American Heritage (Plantation, Florida)
5. Orange Lutheran
6. St. John Bosco
7. St. Thomas Aquinas (Fort Lauderdale, Florida)
8. St. Joseph's Prep (Philadelphia)
9. Chaminade-Madonna (Hollywood, Florida)
10. East St. Louis (Illinois)



On3.com: Ranking the Toughest Leagues in the Nation for 2025

1. **CIF-Southern Section - Trinity League (California)**
2. Greater Miami Athletic Conference (Florida)
3. University Interscholastic League (UIL) Class 6A / District 11 (Texas)
4. Philadelphia Catholic League - Red Division (Pennsylvania)
5. North Jersey Super Conference - United Red Division (New Jersey)

SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC - PLAYER NOTES, HIGHLIGHTS & STATS

0 Dash Fifita | Linebacker | Senior | 5-10 / 185 – Team Captain

- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 57 Inside Linebacker Prospect
- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 1 Linebacker in California
- Ranked No. 11 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 Preseason All-Southland First-Team - Defense by the *Los Angeles Times*
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 1 linebacker in Orange County
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Preseason First-Team All-State Team - Defense
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2024 PrepRedzone.com All-Southern California Junior Team - Defense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Second-Team All-State Junior Team - Defense
- 2024 All-CIF-Southern Section Team
- 2024 *The Sporting News* California All-State High School Football Team: Second-Team - Defense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Defense
- 2024 SBLive / scorebooklive.com / si.com All-CIF Southern Section First-Team - Defense
- 2024 All-Orange County First-Team - Defense (*Orange County Register*)
- 2024 Trinity League Co-Most Valuable Player - Defense
- Has committed to play at Arizona where his brother Noah is the starting quarterback for the Wildcats and an alum of Servite. Also had an offer from Utah

1 Jaion “Duce” Johnson-Smith - Running Back | Sophomore | 6-0 / 190

- Ranked No. 87 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- Has received Division 1 offers from Morgan State, Sacramento State, San Diego State, Syracuse, Maryland, Arkansas and Texas State
- 2024 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense

2 Douglas (Trace) Johnson III | Pro Style Quarterback | Senior | 6-2 / 180

- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 74 Pocket Passer Quarterback Prospect
- Ranked No. 28 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *The Sporting News* as the No. 10 quarterback in the state
- Named by PrepRedzone.com as the No. 3 senior quarterback in Orange County for Class of 2026
- Selected Third-Team All-Southern California - Quarterback by si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 5 top quarterback in Orange County
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- Named by On3.com as the No. 2 high school transfer that will make a big impact nationally this fall (07/01/25)
- Transfer from Buchholz High Scholl in Gainesville, Florida

Season	Career Record as Starter: 23-5					Touchdowns	
	G	Com	Att	Com %	Yards	Passing	Rushing
2024 - Junior	14	225	356	63.2	3,522	29	2
2023 - Sophomore	14	192	318	60.4	2,844	35	0
Career	28	417	674	61.9	6,366	64	2

- Was the 2024 Florida Class 6A Offensive Player of the Year nominee (of 3)
- 2024: Led school to Florida 6A semifinal / Overall team record -- 10-4
- 2023: Led school to Florida 6A semifinal / Overall team record -- 13-1
- 2023: 4S District 3 Champions -- Lost by 1-point to eventual state champion Lakeland
- 2023: Led school to first unbeaten regular season since 2001
- Has committed to play at Tulane. Also received Division 1 offers from Arkansas State, Central Michigan, Troy, West Virginia, East Carolina, Georgia Southern, Southern Mississippi and Wake Forest
- Notable 2024 Performances

Opponent	Statistics of Note
Manatee	453 yards passing
Osceola	439 yards passing / 5 touchdown passes

3 Fletch Palmer | Quarterback | Sophomore | 6-1 / 170

- MaxPreps.com Freshman Highlights - December 12, 2024

<https://www.maxpreps.com/video/watch/carson-palmer-s-son-fletch-palmer-freshman-qb-2024-highlights/?v=146f8264-efa1-47f0-9111-c2ae7eb60fa2>

4 Trent Mosley | Wide Receiver | Senior | 5-11 / 170 | ★ ★ ★ ★

- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 2 Wide Receiver in California
- 2025 si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive All-CIF Southern Section Preseason Team - Athlete
- 2025 PrepRedzone.com All-Southern California Preseason Team - Receiver
- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 34 Wide Receiver Prospect
- Ranked No. 3 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive No. 6 Wide Receiver to Watch
- 2025 *Orange County Register* as the No. 1 receiver in Orange County -- Second-consecutive year
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Preseason First-Team All-State Team - Offense
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports, for class of 2026, as the No. 15 Hot 100 prospect in California (06/26/25)
- Committed to further his career at USC. Had nearly 20 Division 1 offers from top-tier schools including: Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Oregon, Michigan State, Texas A&M, USC, San Diego State, Stanford, Texas and Notre Dame
- 2024 PrepRedzone.com All-Southern California Junior Team - Offense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports: Second-Team All-State Elite Team
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports First-Team All-State Junior Team - Multi-Purpose

- 2024 All-CIF-Southern Section Team
- 2024 *The Sporting News* California All-State High School Football Team: First-Team – All-Purpose
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Offense
- 2024 SBLive / scorebooklive.com / si.com All-CIF Southern Section First-Team - Offense
- 2024 All-Orange County First-Team - Offense (*Orange County Register*)
- 2024 All-Trinity League First-Team - Offense
- Was the featured guest on “Friday Night Live” on Thursday, November 14 -- Prep sports show hosted by *Los Angeles Times* prep guru Eric Sondheimer on “X”
- Continued his assault on the SMCHS Record Book. Has now caught all least one pass in 28-consecutive games. That is every career game played except his first in 2022. The school record is 29 by Brian Finneran in 1993
- Now has 169 career pass receptions. The school record is 178 by Brian Finneran. No doubt he would have broken that mark this season but missed four games due to injury
- *Los Angeles Times*’ Southland Top Performers for the Week at Orange Lutheran
- Praised by Steve Fryer of the *Orange County Register* for putting self development and team before personal
- Named to the MaxPreps.com Preseason Junior All-America First-Team - Wide Receiver
- Ranked No. 2 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2024 -- “Mosley emerged last season as arguably the top offensive weapon in the County”
- Subject of online feature on Cal-Hi Sports (calhisports.com) “Trent Mosley: Man On The Move” by Chuck Nan -- Published: October 3, 2024 / Link: <https://www.calhisports.com/2024/10/03/trent-mosley-man-on-the-move/>
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports to the 2024 Preseason All-State Team - First-Team Multi-Purpose (WR / KR / RB / Wild / DB)
- Named by Cal-Hi Sports as the “Most Versatile Player on the Field” in 2024
- Selected by SBLive/scorebooklive.com as the No. 2 junior (Class of 2026) wide receiver in the California for 2024
- Selected by SBLive/scorebooklive.com as the No. 2 wide receiver in the CIF-Southern Section for 2024
- Selected to the Preseason All CIF-Southern Section team by SBLive/scorebooklive.com -- “Unguardable”
- Ranked at the No. 1 wide receiver in Orange County by the *Orange County Register* for 2024
- Rated the No. 2 junior class wide receiver in the California for 2024
- Rated the No. 2 wide receiver in the CIF-Southern Section for 2024
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports to the 2024 All-Orange County Preseason Team: First-Team - Multi-Purpose
- 2023 SBLive/scorebooklive.com / si.com All-State - Wide Receiver
- 2023 Cal-Hi Sports “State Sophomore Player of the Year”
- 2023 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Defense
- 2023 All-CIF-Southern Section Team
- 2023 Trinity League Co-Most Valuable Player
- 2023 SMCHS Team Most Valuable Player
- 2023 MaxPreps.com All-State Second-Team - Offense
- 2023 MaxPreps.com Sophomore All-America First-Team - Offense
- 2023 All-Orange County First-Team - Offense (*Orange County Register*)
- 2023 PrepRedzone.com All-Southern California Sophomore Team - Offense
- 2023 SBLive/scorebooklive.com All-Southern Section Team
- Ranked No. 30 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2023
- Named one of the top players on the team by the *Orange County Register* for Fall 2023
- Named the No. 6 wide receiver / tight end in Orange County for the 2023 season by journalist Dan Albano
- Selected as an Underclass All-American by Lemming Prep Football Report (Tom Lemming) for 2023 season
- 2023 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Second-Team - Multi-Purpose
- 2022 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Frosh Watch List
- 2022 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Offense
- 2022 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense

5 Logan Hirou | Defensive Back | Senior | 6-1 / 187

- Ranked No. 37 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Honorable Mention - Defensive Back in California
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 4 defensive back in Orange County
- 2025 Third-Team All-Southern California – Quarterback by si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team

- Has committed to play at UCLA. Also received Division 1 offers from Arizona, California, Colorado State, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, Sacramento State, San Diego State, Utah, Tulane, Nevada-Las Vegas, Washington State and Yale
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Defense
- 2024 All-Trinity League First-Team - Defense
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports to the 2024 All-Orange County Preseason Team: Second-Team - Defense

6 Grant Mosley | Wide Receiver | Sophomore | 6-0 / 185

- Cal-Hi Sports: California Freshman Football Players to Watch – 2024 Season -- Older brother Emmett V had a tremendous season as a freshman at Stanford coming off a knee injury and older brother Trent is one of the state's top Class of 2026 prospects as a versatile receiver here at SMCHS
- Became the third Mosley brother to play for the Eagles program. Captured his first varsity reception -- 32 yards -- against Mission Viejo

7 Jayden Crowder | Defensive Back | Senior | 5-11 / 165

- Ranked No. 45 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 25 Defensive Back in California for 2025
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 6 defensive back in Orange County
- 2025 Third-Team All-Southern California – Defensive Back by si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Third-Team All-State Junior Team - Defense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Defense
- 2024 All-Orange County Third-Team - Defense (*Orange County Register*)
- Commitment to California (UC Berkeley). Also had offers from Miami (Florida), Duke, Washington, Colorado, Tennessee, Texas A&M, SMU, North Carolina, Penn State, San Diego State, Michigan State and UCLA
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports to the 2024 All-Orange County Preseason Team: Third-Team - Defense

8 Ivrick Carrigan | Linebacker | Senior | 6-0 / 213

- Named by PrepRedzone.com as the No. 6 senior linebacker in Orange County for Class of 2026
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- All-Sunset League First-Team - Defense

9 Luke Gazzaniga | Tight End | Junior | 6-1 / 180

- Collected his second pass reception of the season which was also his first-ever touchdown scored at the prep level -- in a rout of Inglewood in the CIF-SS Division 1 First Round game

11 Simote Katoanga | Edge / Defensive End | Senior | 6-5 / 250

- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 12 Defensive End Prospect
- Ranked No. 16 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 12 Defensive Lineman in California
- 2025 No. 3 Defensive Lineman to Watch by si.com / SBLive / scorebooklive
- 2025 Preseason All-Southland First-Team - Defense by the *Los Angeles Times*
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 5 lineman in Orange County
- Named by *USA Today* High School Sports / usatodayhss.com as the top-rated defensive lineman recruit in California for the Class of 2026
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Preseason Third-Team All-State Team - Defense
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports, for class of 2026, as the No. 17 Hot 100 prospect in California (06/26/25)
- 2024 *Orange County Register* All-County Second-Team - Defense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Second-Team All-State Junior Team - Defense
- 2024 First-Team All-Trinity League - Defense
- Committed to play at USC after having received 30 Division 1 offers -- Arizona, Arizona State, California, Clemson, Georgia, Kansas, Miami (Florida), Michigan State, Florida State, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma State, Oregon, Sacramento State, San Diego State, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M, Nevada - Las Vegas, South Florida, Utah, Washington, Washington State, Western Michigan, Wisconsin, Central Michigan and Marshall

14 Joshua “Siua” Holani | Defensive Back | Senior | 5-10 / 175

- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2024 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Defense

21 Ca’ron “Prime” Williams | Defensive Back | Sophomore | 5-11 / 155

- Ranked No. 80 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 10 defensive back in Orange County
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2024 MaxPreps.com Freshman All-America Team: Second-Team - Defense
- Has received Division 1 offers from Arizona State, Texas A&M, Coastal Carolina, Southern Methodist (SMU), Toledo, Missouri, USC, Washington, San Diego State, North Carolina, Vanderbilt, Idaho and California

40 Jason Perez | Defensive Lineman | Senior | 5-11 / 205

- 2023 All-Trinity Honorable Mention - Defense

44 Aleki “Leki” Holani | Linebacker | Senior | 6-0 / 218

- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 61 Inside Linebacker Prospect
- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 9 Linebacker in California
- Ranked No. 47 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 6 linebacker in Orange County
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Third-Team All-State Junior Team - Defense
- 2024 All-CIF-Southern Section Team
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee - Defense
- 2024 All-Trinity League First-Team - Defense

52 Isaia Vandermade | Offensive / Defensive Lineman | Junior | 6-4 / 280

- Ranked No. 83 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Honorable Mention - Defensive Lineman in California
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2025 PrepRedzone.com Top Offensive Linemen to Watch in Southern California
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports First-Team All-State Sophomore Team - Offense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports All-State Nominee
- 2024 *All-Bay Area News Group* - Honorable Mention - Defensive Line
- 2024 *San Francisco Chronicle* All-Metro Team - Honorable Mention
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Central Coast Section Team - Second-Team
- 2024 West Catholic Athletic League - Sophomore Player of the Year
- 2024 All-West Catholic Athletic League - First-Team
- 2024 Preseason All-Bay Area News Group - Defensive Line

58 Tonga Uhila | Defensive Tackle | Junior | 5-10 / 160

- Finished with the best game of his young career with one interception and one sack versus Liberty (Bakersfield) in 2024

77 Niniva Nicholson | Offensive Lineman | Senior | 6-4 / 275

- 2025 *The Sporting News* No. 4 Offensive Lineman in California
- ESPN / SC Next Class of 2026 No. 79 Offensive Guard Prospect
- Ranked No. 17 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 6 lineman in Orange County
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Preseason First-Team All-State Team - Offense
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2025 PrepRedzone.com Top Offensive Linemen to Watch in Southern California
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports, for class of 2026, as the No. 74 Hot 100 prospect in California (06/26/25)
- 2024 First-Team All-Trinity League - Offense
- 2024 *Orange County Register* All-County Second-Team - Offense
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports First-Team All-State Junior Team - Offense

78 Manoah Faupusa | Offensive / Defensive Lineman | Senior | 6-4 / 360

- Ranked No. 17 by *Orange County Register* of Hot 150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2025
- 2025 *Orange County Register* No. 7 lineman in Orange County
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Team
- 2025 *The Sporting News* Honorable Mention - Defensive Lineman in California
- Selected by Cal-Hi Sports, for class of 2026, as the No. 50 Hot 100 prospect in California (06/26/25)
- 2025 Cal-Hi Sports Preseason All-Orange County Second-Team - Defense
- 2024 *San Francisco Chronicle* Second-Team All-Metro Team
- 2024 West Catholic Athletic League (WCAL) Defensive Lineman of the Year
- 2024 First-Team All-WCAL -- Notched 20 total tackles, 5 tackles for loss, 1 sack and 5 hurries
- 2024 Cal-Hi Sports Third-Team All-State Junior Team - Defense
- Has committed to play at Arizona after also receiving Division 1 offers from North Carolina, Oklahoma State, California, Colorado, Miami (Florida), Sacramento State, San Jose State, Texas, UCLA, Nevada - Las Vegas, USC and Washington

THIS WEEK'S OPPONENT: MISSION VIEJO



SMCHS Season Game No. 1 / Non League Game No. 1

Game Day / Date: Friday, August 22, 2025 / 7:00 p.m.

Game Location: Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)

Tickets: www.gofan.co

Nickname: Diablos

Head Coach: Chad Johnson (8th season) -- Overall record: 64-16 (.800)

2024 Season: Overall Record: 10-1 / Alpha League: 3-0 (1st Place / Champions) / CIF-Southern Section Division 1 Playoffs: 0-1

Key Players to Watch:

- Davonte Curtis – Running Back – Senior
- Jayden Hill – Defensive End – Senior
- Jeron Jones – Cornerback – Senior
- Kane Nolte – Defensive Tackle – Senior
- Luke Fahey – Quarterback – Senior
- Vance Spafford – Wide Receiver – Senior

Bright Lights:

This game has spotlights shining all over the stadium. Alum, Heisman Trophy Award winner and 14-year NFL quarterback Carson Palmer makes his debut as SMCHS's head coach. The opponents, Mission Viejo, are ranked No. 14 in the MaxPreps.com national rankings. SMCHS is close behind at No. 16. Both schools have talented players that can impact the direction and outcome of the game. The Diablos boast Miami-committed wide receiver Vance Stafford and Ohio State-committed quarterback Luke Fahey, recognized as one of the best quarterbacks in Orange County and CIF-Southern Section.

All-Time Series:

Season	Score	Location	Notes
2024	MV 35, SMCHS 7	Diablo Stadium	Nonleague
2019	MV 21, SMCHS 10	Trabuco Hills	Nonleague
2018	MV 30, SMCHS 20	Diablo Stadium	Nonleague - Later reversed to forfeit win for SMCHS
2017	MV 28, SMCHS 23	Trabuco Hills	Nonleague
2016	MV 48, SMCHS 21	Diablo Stadium	Nonleague
2011	SMCHS 21, MV 20	Diablo Stadium	CIF-SS Pac-5 Semifinal
2010	MV 31, SMCHS 28	Saddleback College	CIF-SS Pac-5 Quarterfinal
2006	SMCHS 25, MV 24	Saddleback College	CIF-SS Pac-5 Quarterfinal

NEXT WEEK'S OPPONENT: CENTENNIAL (CORONA)



SMCHS Season Game No. 2 / Non League Game No. 2

Game Day / Date / Time: Thursday, August 28, 2025 / 7:00 p.m.

Game Location: Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)

Tickets: www.gofan.co

Nickname: Huskies

Head Coach: Matt Logan (29th season) -- 295-64-0 (.822)

2025 Season: 0-0

This Week: vs. Servite (Anaheim)

2024 Season: Overall: 9-3 / Big West-Upper League: 5-0 (1st Place / Champions) / CIF-Southern Section - Division 1 Playoffs: 1-1

All-Time Series: Series – SMCHS leads 2-1

-- 1989: SMCHS 42, Centennial 7 (Saddleback College) - Nonleague

-- 2023: Centennial 34, SMCHS 21 (Saddleback College) - Nonleague

-- 2024: SMCHS 34, Centennial 15 (Corona) – Nonleague

SMCHS went on the road and upset mighty Centennial on a game televised throughout all Southern California. The Huskies return to Orange County looking for revenge. The game will be played on Thursday night, a short preparation week for the Eagles after their tough opener. The game has also been selected as "Senior Night" for the Class of 2026 Eagle's players

Key Players to Watch:

- Boogie Williams – Defensive Back – Senior
- Braylin Drake – Running Back – Junior
- Dominick Catalano – Quarterback – Senior
- Hayden Zentner – Linebacker – Senior
- Jonathan McKinley II – Linebacker – Senior
- Keawe Browne – Athlete – Senior
- Tyler George – Wide Receiver – Senior

OTHER NOTES & NEWS

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JACOB BOWER



From Walk-On to Potential Game-Changer: The Journey of Nebraska's Jacob Bower

SMCHS Alum Jacob Bower went from overlooked walk-on to scholarship linebacker at Nebraska

By: Michael Cavallo | si.com | August 12, 2025

In an era where college football is increasingly defined by transfer portal headlines and NIL deals, Jacob Bower's story cuts through the noise with raw authenticity. A former walk-on who once paid his way just to be part of the Nebraska program, Bower has transformed himself into a scholarship linebacker and a symbol of everything the Huskers hope to build under head coach Matt Rhule. His journey, from scout team reps to spring standout, isn't just a feel-good tale. It's a blueprint for the kind of player development that still matters in Lincoln.

Bower's rise from walk-on to scholarship linebacker is the kind of story that reminds fans why they love college football. At just 10 years old, Bower wasn't chasing tackles; he was singing in a traveling church choir. But during a performance stop at Memorial Stadium, something shifted. Bower fell in love with Nebraska football, planting the seed for a journey that would one day bring him back.

After piling up 174 tackles, 6 1/2 sacks, and 4 interceptions over his final two seasons at SMCHS, Bower arrived in Lincoln in 2023 as a walk-on determined to earn his place with Huskers. After redshirting in his first season at Nebraska, Bower saw action in six games during the 2024 season, quietly beginning to carve out a role on special teams.

Bower's relentless drive and breakout spring showing in 2025 didn't go unnoticed. During a routine practice, Rhule halted the action to deliver a moment that would redefine Bower's journey, awarding him a scholarship in front of the entire team.

Bower's path to a Nebraska scholarship wasn't paved with headlines or shortcuts. His story is a reminder that heart still matters.

2025

**SENIOR
NIGHT**

Thursday, August 28 vs. Centennial (Corona)
@ Trabuco Hills High School / 7:00 p.m.

2025

HOMECOMING

Friday, October 17 vs. St. John Bosco
@ Trabuco Hills High School / 7:00 p.m.

Electronic Ticket Admission -- Santa Margarita Catholic Football Games Home and Away



GOFAN.CO

Home Game Prices:

- Adult: \$13.60 (\$12 admission + \$1.60 fee)
- Seniors (65 years plus): \$6 (\$5 admission + \$1 fee)
- Children (5-14 years): \$4 (\$3 admission + \$1 fee)

Website: <https://gofan.co/app/school/CA19032?activity=Football>

e-Ticket: Present at stadium gate

Note: Away game prices may vary

Santa Margarita Catholic High School – 2025 Varsity Football Schedule

Day / Date	Opponent	Location / Field
Friday, August 22	Mission Viejo	Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)
Thursday, August 28	Centennial (Corona) – “Senior Night”	Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)
Friday, September 5	@ Highland (Palmdale)	Highland Field – Campus
Friday, September 12	@ Oaks Christian (Westlake Village)	Redell Field at Thorson Stadium – Campus
Saturday, September 27	Bishop Gorman (Las Vegas, Nevada)	Tesoro High School (RSM / Los Flores)
Friday, October 3	@ Servite	Santa Ana Bowl
Friday, October 10	@ Mater Dei	Santa Ana Bowl
Friday, October 17	St. John Bosco – “Homecoming”	Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)
Friday, October 24	Orange Lutheran	Trabuco Hills High School (Mission Viejo)
Friday, October 31	@ JSerra Catholic	JSerra Field - Campus

All games start at 7:00 p.m.



MISSION VIEJO DIABLOS 2025 FOOTBALL ROSTER

No.	Player Name	Pos.	Class
1	Luke Karby	WR / TE	Junior
2	Cash Gervase	LB	Junior
3	Luke Fahey	QB	Senior
4	Jeron Jones	DB	Senior
5	Jayden "J.D." Hill	DL	Senior
6	Carson Vandermade	WR	Junior
7	Davonte Curtis	RB	Senior
8	Jovani "JoJo" Reed	DB	Junior
9	Brady Bowman	LB	Senior
10	Jack Junker	WR	Junior
11	Jordan Hicks	DB	Sophomore
13	Vance Spafford	WR	Senior
14	Kollin Woodbury, Jr.	WR / DB	Sophomore
15	Ryder Brown	DB	Senior
16	Bryce Warner	LB	Junior
17	Kole Davis	DL / TE	Junior
18	Brett Burnor	QB	Freshman
19	Ethan Esmailian	QB	Sophomore
20	William Ingham	LB	Sophomore
21	Colin Burke	DB	Senior
22	Desmond Maxwell, Jr.	Ath	Freshman
23	Sawyer Thomson	DB / WR	Senior
24	Matthew Dalhover	LB	Sophomore
25	Myles Lassiter	DB	Sophomore
26	Dallas Miller	RB	Junior
27	Stephen Smith	DB	Sophomore
28	William Taylor	RB	Senior
29	Noah Carreon	RB	Sophomore
30	Noah Rodriguez	DB	Junior
31	Zachary Foeldi	DB	Senior
32	Wyatt Boardman	RB / LB	Freshman
33	Jaydon Riggio	DL	Sophomore
34	Caleb Sylvia	P / K	Junior
36	Jacob Gabran	DB / WR	Sophomore
38	Troy Ramirez	DB	Sophomore
39	Jeremiah Patrick	WR / DB	Freshman
40	Jayden Ramirez	- - -	Freshman
41	Sean Lander	WR	Sophomore

Head Coach: Chad Johnson

No.	Player Name	Pos.	Class
42	Dominic Davidson	LB / FB	Freshman
43	Everett Mahoney	- - -	Freshman
44	Kane Nolte	DL	Junior
45	Ryder Newhouser	DB / WR	Freshman
46	Jayden Richard	CB	Freshman
48	Maddox Mataele	- - -	Sophomore
50	Kyle Gerrish	OL / DL	Sophomore
51	Jackson Rogers	OL	Sophomore
52	Shawn Nevin	DL	Senior
53	Benjamin Ackley-Garcia	OL	Freshman
55	Noah Lee	OL / DL	Junior
56	Gannon Geldermann	DL	Junior
57	Flameno Inigo	OL / DL	Sophomore
58	Isaiah Bird	RB	Sophomore
59	Brady Coleman	- - -	Freshman
60	Jett Jackson	DE	Freshman
63	Ethan Bailey	OL / DL	Sophomore
66	Triston Gin, Jr.	DL	Sophomore
67	Michael Ibarra	OL	Senior
68	Max Davidson	OL	Sophomore
70	Jacob Infante	OL	Sophomore
72	Tanner Sauer	DL	Sophomore
73	Jonah Madigan	- - -	Junior
74	Dylan Felli	OL	Junior
75	Baxter Middagh	OL	Junior
77	Tyler Johnson	OL	Junior
78	Thomas Lander	OL	Senior
79	Jack Miller	OL	Junior
80	Max Markofski	WR / TE	Junior
81	Bonhomme Jeremy	WR	Sophomore
83	Jaden Lukin	LB	Senior
84	Isaiah Murguia	P / K	Junior
86	Marcus Fisher, Jr.	WR	Freshman
87	Bo Johnson	QB	Freshman
88	Tyler Hawksford	WR	Sophomore
89	Gavin Ploszaj	WR / DB	Freshman
92	Anthony Ajaltouni	DB	Junior
99	Briggs Weber	DL	Sophomore