THE TRENCH REPORT
LINE OF SCRIMMAGE DECIDES EVERYTHING

VOL. 1 · NO. 1 · WEEK 5
FRIDAY, SEPT. 18, 2026
REPORT 2 OF 3 · THE THREE

POSTGAME — added Monday, Sept. 21, 2026. Everything below this box was written before kickoff and has not been changed. Full ruling: **The Ruling: Week 5**.

Final: Sierra Canyon 28, Orange Lutheran 10. Computer 16.8, actual margin 18, Rick 13. Right winner, short margin. Re-rate: Sierra Canyon 76.8 → 79.8 (rank 2); Orange Lutheran 62.5 → 63.3 (rank 6).

ORANGE LUTHERAN

LANCERS · TRINITY LEAGUE · ORANGE

62.5

COMMITTEE RATING · PULLED 9/13 · SECTION #6

3–1

FRI 9/18
7:00 PM

AT

CHATSWORTH
MISSION LEAGUE VS TRINITY LEAGUE

SIERRA CANYON

TRAILBLAZERS · MISSION LEAGUE · CHATSWORTH

76.8

COMMITTEE RATING · PULLED 9/13 · SECTION #3

3–0

WEDNESDAY · THE THREE · GAME 2

THE NATIONAL STAGE HAS A DOOR CHARGE

Orange Lutheran is 3rd in Orange County and 9th in California. Sierra Canyon is ranked 9th in the country and just put 52 on a Hawaii team. The computer says two touchdowns. Rick says the Lancers are auditioning for a room the Trailblazers already live in.



BY BIG RICK DELGADO · RANCHO CUCAMONGA

COMPUTER: SIERRA CANYON BY 16.8 · 88.5% **RICK:** SIERRA CANYON 34–21 **SC LAST THREE:**

I respect the Trinity League. I say it every week so the OC people can't say I don't. Orange Lutheran is a top-ten team in this section and top-ten in the state, and I'll say that out loud. Now here's the thing about Friday. There's a difference between being a very good team and being the kind of team that plays on a Friday night in September and the whole country is watching. Sierra Canyon is the second thing. Orange Lutheran is trying to become it.

THE RÉSUMÉ

RATINGS: COMMITTEE SCALE · PULLED 9/13

Sierra Canyon's three games, in order, on the committee's scale:

DATE	SIERRA CANYON OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. REC.	OPP. RATING	NOTE
8/21	at JSerra	W 42–21	3–1	52.0	#9 in the section, projected D2 top seed; #5 in OC

DATE	SIERRA CANYON OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. REC.	OPP. RATING	NOTE
8/27	at Chaminade-Madonna (FL)	W 24–7	—	not on scale	out of state
9/10	Saint Louis (HI)	W 52–0	—	not on scale	out of state
PF–PA · avg margin					**118–28 · +30.0**

Schedule and sites per MaxPreps (page updated Sep 13). Two of three opponents are out of state and carry no committee rating; that's the cost of playing a national schedule and the desk prints it as a gap, not a guess.

Read that first line again. Sierra Canyon walked into JSerra's building in Week 0 and beat a Trinity League team by three touchdowns. JSerra is a 52 on the committee's scale. That win alone is a better line on a résumé than anything Orange Lutheran has done.

DATE	ORANGE LUTHERAN OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. RATING	NOTE
8/21	Central	L 22–23	—	one-point loss; opponent not on the section scale
8/28	Cathedral Catholic	W 38–24	—	San Diego Section
9/4	Basha (AZ)	W 23–17	—	out of state
9/11	Serra	W 35–0	30.7	#25 in the section, top of the D3 band · best win
PF–PA · avg margin				**118–64 · +13.5**

Results per MaxPreps/desk database, 9/17. Sites for these four games are not verified by the desk and are not printed. Serra's rating pulled 9/17.

SAME POINTS SCORED. HALF THE MARGIN. ONE OF THESE TEAMS HAS BEEN CLOSING.

Both teams have scored 118 points. Sierra Canyon has given up 28. Orange Lutheran has given up 64. The Lancers lost their opener by a point to Central and needed a touchdown to get past Basha. The Trailblazers have not played a one-score game. That's the whole story of the ratings gap: 76.8 to 62.5 isn't a talent gap, it's a finishing gap.

THE COMPUTER SAYS

DESK MODEL · METHODOLOGY §4

THE COMPUTER

Sierra Canyon by 16.8

Sierra Canyon wins 88.5% of the time.
76.8 + 2.5 (home) − 62.5 = 16.8 · P = Φ(16.8 ÷ 14)
Both ratings pulled 9/13.

BIG RICK

Sierra Canyon 34–21

Right winner, wrong margin. The computer wants 16.8 and I'm almost four short of it. Orange Lutheran is a top-ten team in this state and top-ten teams don't get run off the field in September. Sierra Canyon wins; Sierra Canyon doesn't cover.

Strength of schedule, MaxPreps, same week: Sierra Canyon 51.5, Orange Lutheran 51.8. Dead even. So don't come at me with "who have they played." They've played the same weight. One of them is 3–0 with a 30-point margin and one of them is 3–1 with a 13-point margin.

THE POLLS

FRYER 9/14 · ALBANO 9/16 · MAXPREPS CA 9/17 · ON3 9/17

Orange County has the Lancers 3rd in both papers, behind Santa Margarita and Mater Dei. The state board has them 9th and Sierra Canyon 5th. On3 has Sierra Canyon 9th in the country and made this one of its national games of the week, with a note that the Lancers hired Ray Fenton away from Los Alamitos to run this thing. New coach, national opponent, on the road. That's the audition.

THE EYE TEST

OPINION, LABELED

I've watched enough of both to know what Friday is. Sierra Canyon plays like a program that expects to be on TV. They score early and their defense has given up 28 points in three games including a shutout. Orange Lutheran is talented at every skill spot and has played tight games because it plays tight; the one-point loss to Central is the tell. You can't play tight in Chatsworth.

The Lancers are good. They are not on the national stage yet. Friday is the door charge.

THE PICK

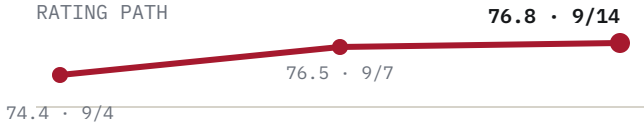
Sierra Canyon 34–21. Same winner as the computer, thirteen instead of seventeen. The Lancers are good enough to make it a game into the third quarter and not good enough to win it. If they cover, the computer read this better than I did, and I'll say that Saturday.

SIERRA CANYON

TRAILBLAZERS · MISSION LEAGUE · CHATSWORTH

3–0

Committee rating (9/13)	**76.8**
Section rank · projected	**#3 · D1, 3-seed**
MaxPreps rating · SS rank	**95.95 · #5**
Strength of schedule (MP)	**51.5**
MaxPreps CA rank	**#5**
National (On3, 9/17)	**#9**
PF–PA · avg margin	**118–28 · +30.0**
Best win	**42–21 at JSerra**
Worst loss	**—**



REMAINING SCHEDULE · MAXPREPS 9/13

9/25	Pacifica	home
10/2	Loyola (Mission)	17.9 · D4
10/9	at Serra (Mission)	30.7 · D3
10/16	at Chaminade (Mission)	—
10/23	at Notre Dame SO (Mission)	—
10/30	Bishop Amat (Mission)	—

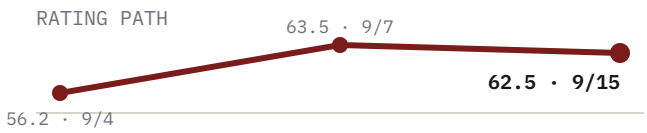
A national schedule with one section win that happens to be over a top-ten section team. Undefeated, unthreatened, and the rating barely moves because the computer expected all of it.

ORANGE LUTHERAN

LANCERS · TRINITY LEAGUE · ORANGE

3–1

Committee rating (9/13)	**62.5**
Section rank · projected	**#6 · D1, 6-seed**
MaxPreps rating · SS rank	**89.20 · #7**
Strength of schedule (MP)	**51.8**
MaxPreps CA rank	**#9**
OC polls · Fryer / Albano	**#3 / #3**
PF–PA · avg margin	**118–64 · +13.5**
Best win	**35–0 Serra**
Worst loss	**22–23 Central**
Head coach	**Ray Fenton (from Los Alamitos)**



TRINITY LEAGUE CONTEXT · COMMITTEE SCALE

Santa Margarita	82.8 · #1
Mater Dei	78.3 · #2
St. John Bosco	72.9 · #4
Orange Lutheran	**62.5 · #6**
Servite	53.8 · #8
JSerra	52.0 · #9

Fourth in the best league in the state, which would win most leagues anywhere. The rating dipped a point after the Serra shutout because the computer expected more. That's the finishing gap in one number.

THE LEDGER · RICK VS. THE COMPUTER · 2026

DATE	GAME	COMPUTER	RICK	FINAL	WHO WAS RIGHT
9/18	Etiwanda at Orange	Orange by 7.3 (69.9%)	Etiwanda 49–21	—	Saturday
9/18	Orange Lutheran at Sierra Canyon	Sierra Canyon by 16.8 (88.5%)	Sierra Canyon 34–21	—	Saturday
9/18	Mater Dei vs Bishop Gorman (NV), Santa Ana Stadium	no line — Gorman isn't on the committee's scale	Mater Dei 24–16	—	Saturday
Season: Rick 0–0 · Computer 0–0					

Sources. Committee ratings: hsratings.com, Sierra Canyon and Orange Lutheran pulled 9/13; Serra, Loyola 9/17; section ordering 9/17. MaxPreps ratings, SOS, CA board 9/17. Schedules: MaxPreps Sierra Canyon schedule (updated Sep 13, 2026); Orange Lutheran results per desk database 9/17 (sites unverified, not printed). National ranking and coaching note: On3 games of the week, Sept. 17, 2026. Polls: Fryer Top 25 (9/14), Albano Top 35 (9/16). Model: desk methodology v1.0, home field 2.5, σ = 14. Rick's pick is Rick's. School marks belong to their schools and appear here for identification in commentary. **Reading the numbers:** the full key is in Report 1.