THE TRENCH REPORT
LINE OF SCRIMMAGE DECIDES EVERYTHING

VOL. 1 · NO. 1 · WEEK 5
FRIDAY, SEPT. 18, 2026
REPORT 1 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: Orange 35, Etiwanda 28. Quarters: Etiwanda 7-7-0-14, Orange 7-7-7-14. The computer projected Orange by 7.3; Orange won by 7. Rick had Etiwanda 49–21 and was wrong. Sunday's re-rate: Orange 20.2 → 25.5 (rank 36, now projecting D3 as a 12-seed rather than D4 as a 3-seed); Etiwanda 15.4 → 15.6.

THURSDAY · SOMEBODY GOES ON THE STAND

TIME TO FIND OUT WHO IS REAL

Orange is 4–0, 180–44, and 18th in the county. Etiwanda is 2–2, 11th in the Inland Empire, and has played four ranked teams. The committee's computer likes Orange by a touchdown. Big Rick has seen the schedules.



BY BIG RICK DELGADO · RANCHO CUCAMONGA

THE VERDICT

FRAUD ALERT

Half-real at best.
Real in their weight class.

ETIWANDA (2–2) AT ORANGE (4–0)

Fri 9/18 · 7:00 PM · Fred Kelly Stadium (El Modena HS), Orange · nonleague

GOING PUBLIC.

For a while now the Trench Report has been a thing I wrote for the guys I watch film with, a few coaches who'll never admit they read it, and a group chat that fights about the Baseline League like it's the SEC. Same format every week: three games, the computer's line, my line, and one team that has to prove it's real. Somebody finally said put it where people can see it. So here it is. Every Thursday from now on. Wednesday's the slate, Thursday somebody goes on the stand, Saturday I eat whatever I have to eat.

Two rules I don't break. Every number in here comes from the committee's own scale, MaxPreps, or a newspaper page with a date on it, and I'll tell you which. And my pick is always labeled as mine, next to the computer's, so you can keep score on me. The ledger's at the bottom. It starts at 0–0 tonight.

Every week somebody's 4–0 walks in here in a fresh letterman jacket and I ask one question. Who'd you play? This week it's Orange. Sit down.

THE RÉSUMÉ

RATINGS: COMMITTEE SCALE · PULLED 9/13–9/17

Orange is 4–0. Points: 180 for, 44 against. Average margin 34. Gorgeous. Now let me read you the schedule the way the committee's computer reads it.

DATE	ORANGE OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. REC.	OPP. RATING	PROJ. DIV.
8/21	North Torrance	W 49–14	2–2	-7.7	D10
8/28	at Laguna Beach	W 28–21	1–3	12.1	D5
9/4	Elsinore	W 40–9	2–2	-5.1	D9

DATE	ORANGE OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. REC.	OPP. RATING	PROJ. DIV.
9/10	Locke	W 63–0 *	—	not rated	—
Average opponent rating (three rated)				**-0.2**	

* The Register printed Locke 62–0; MaxPreps says 63–0. Locke has no rating on the committee's scale and no row in the database. Ratings from hsratings.com, pulled 9/13; records per MaxPreps 9/17.

Two of those four opponents carry a *negative* rating. The fourth one doesn't have a rating at all. Either way that game told the computer nothing.

Orange's best win is Laguna Beach, on the road, by seven. Credit where it's due: that's a real road win over a real team. Laguna Beach is 1–3 because the other three teams they've played are a combined 12–0 (Yorba Linda, Westlake, and Orange). But it's one win. The other three are a spa day.

Now Etiwanda.

DATE	ETIWANDA OPPONENT	RESULT	OPP. REC.	OPP. RATING	PROJ. DIV.	IE POLL
8/20	at Cajon	W 42–34	2–2	14.3	D4	#12
8/28	Murrieta Mesa	L 25–35	2–2	8.2	D6	#10
9/4	at Alta Loma	W 37–14	3–1	8.2	D6	#17
9/10	Norco	L 26–56	4–0	39.2	D2	#2
Average opponent rating (all four)				**17.5**		

IE poll = IE Varsity Top 20, Eric-Paul Johnson, Press-Enterprise/Daily Bulletin, Sept. 14. Ratings pulled 9/13–9/17.

EVERY TEAM ETIWANDA HAS PLAYED IS RANKED IN THE IE TOP 20. EVERY ONE.

Etiwanda's average opponent on the committee's scale is 17.5. Orange's three opponents you can look up average −0.2. That's not a gap. That's a

different sport.

Yeah, Etiwanda's given up points. Look who to. Norco is a 39 on the committee's scale, projected Division 2, and they hung 56. Cajon's a 14 and Etiwanda beat them on the road. Etiwanda has taken punches from real teams. Orange has been shadowboxing.

THE COMPUTER SAYS

DESK MODEL · METHODOLOGY §4

Here's the part where Orange fans start typing. Fine. Print it. Same division band. Orange nine seats higher. I read it twice too.

THE COMPUTER

Orange by 7.3

Orange wins 69.9% of the time.
20.2 + 2.5 (home) − 15.4 = 7.3 · P = Φ(7.3 ÷ 14)
The committee's ratings, the desk's formula. Not my number.

BIG RICK

Etiwanda 49–21

The computer doesn't watch film. I do.
Strength of schedule, same MaxPreps scale, same week: Etiwanda 39.2, Orange 23.9. One team's been in a fight. One's been in a hot tub.

THE POLLS

IE VARSITY 9/14 · FRYER 9/14 · ALBANO 9/16

The IE's paper has Etiwanda 11th. Eleventh three weeks running, after they'd climbed to eighth off the Cajon win. Four of the teams above them are teams they've already played or are about to. Orange County's papers have Orange 18th and 19th. Different polls, different counties, and I'll say that so nobody has to say it for me. But an 11th-ranked team in the 909 with four ranked opponents on its résumé versus an 18th-ranked team in the 714 whose best win is a 1–3 team? I know which one I'm buying.

And the IE paper didn't even preview this game. Eight games on Johnson's Friday–Saturday card. This wasn't one of them.

THE EYE TEST

SOURCED WHERE IT SAYS SO; OPINION WHERE IT DOESN'T

The computer doesn't watch film. I do.

Brandon Andrade. Senior receiver. Last spring he finished top five in the state in *both* hurdles at the CIF State meet. Three weeks ago he caught five balls for 111 yards and two touchdowns at Alta Loma, and Alta Loma's coach said afterward, out loud, to a reporter: "The speed was hard to adjust to." Alta Loma is 3–1 and ranked. Orange hasn't seen a body like that yet. Not in Torrance, not in Laguna, not in Wildomar, not against Locke.

Landon Congalton: 49-of-78, 656 yards, nine touchdowns, two picks through four games. Jaden Lindsay: 228 yards on the ground. Coach Nick Baiz is back on the sideline after a year away and this is his group.

Orange has a highlight-reel quarterback. I'm not touching the kid; he's good. He's put those highlights up against negative-rated defenses.

Orange is a very good *middle-of-the-section* team. They are not ready for a Baseline League front and Baseline League speed, and Friday is where they find that out.

THE VERDICT

FRAUD ALERT. Half-real at best. Real in their weight class; this isn't their weight class.

The computer says Orange by 7. Big Rick says Etiwanda 49, Orange 21. One of us is going to look dumb Saturday morning. Check the ledger. It's never been me.

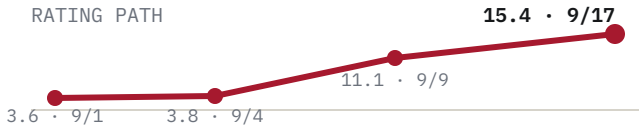
(It's been me. It's on the site.)

ETIWANDA

EAGLES · BASELINE LEAGUE · RANCHO CUCAMONGA

2–2

Committee rating (9/17)	**15.4**
Section rank · projected	**#52 · D4, 12-seed**
MaxPreps rating · SS rank	**60.53 · #42**
Strength of schedule (MP)	**39.2**
MaxPreps CA rank	**#89**
IE Varsity Top 20	**#11 (prev 11)**
PF–PA · avg margin	**130–139 · −2.2**
Opponents combined	**11–5**
Best win	**42–34 at Cajon**
Worst loss	**25–35 Murrieta Mesa**
Head coach	**Nick Baiz (returned 2026)**



PRODUCERS · MAXPREPS 9/15 · 4 GP

PLAYER	LINE
L. Congalton, QB (Sr)	49–78 · 656 yds · 9 TD · 2 INT
J. Lindsay, RB (Sr)	38 car · 228 yds · 1 TD
C. Wakumoto Jr., WR (Sr)	14 rec · 180 yds · 4 TD
B. Andrade, WR (Sr)	9 rec · 142 yds · 2 TD
J. Shepherd, RB/WR (Jr)	9 car · 119 yds · 2 TD

REMAINING SCHEDULE

9/25	Barstow	1.7 · D7
10/2	Upland (Baseline)	−5.7
10/8	at Damien (Baseline)	20.9 · D4
10/16	Rancho Cucamonga (Baseline)	33.8 · D2
10/23	at Chino Hills (Baseline)	11.4 · D5

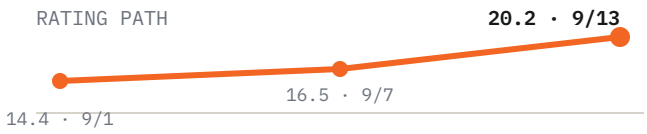
Two losses to teams rated 39.2 and 8.2; two road wins over ranked IE teams. The rating has quadrupled since Sept. 1 and the schedule ahead is the Baseline League. Whatever they are, they've been hit.

ORANGE

PANTHERS · FOXTROT LEAGUE · ORANGE

4–0

Committee rating (9/13)	**20.2**
Section rank · projected	**#43 · D4, 3-seed**
MaxPreps rating · SS rank	**58.88 · #45**
Strength of schedule (MP)	**23.9**
MaxPreps CA rank	**#95**
OC polls · Fryer / Albano	**#19 / #18**
PF–PA · avg margin	**180–44 · +34.0**
Opponents combined (3 rated)	**5–7 + Locke**
Best win	**28–21 at Laguna Beach**
Worst loss	**—**



PRODUCERS · MAXPREPS 9/17 · 4 GP

PLAYER	LINE
K. Woodbury, WR (Jr)	20 rec · 504 yds · 4 TD
D. Stone, WR (Jr)	14 rec · 321 yds · 4 TD
J. Dunklin, RB (Fr)	34 car · 267 yds · 2 TD
K. Hardiman, WR (Fr)	8 rec · 179 yds
I. Harrison, S (Sr)	26 tkl · 3 GP
A. Gourdine, S (Sr)	25 tkl · 1 INT

Undefeated, prolific, and untested: three rated opponents average below zero. The one road test (Laguna Beach) went about how the computer expected. Friday is the first game on the schedule the computer can't call a formality.

WHERE THE WRITERS HAVE THEM

THREE PAPERS, THREE POLLS, ONE FRIDAY

IE VARSITY TOP 20

Eric-Paul Johnson · Press-Enterprise / Daily Bulletin · Mon 9/14

Centennial (1–2)	1
Norco (4–0)	2
Murrieta Mesa (2–2)	10
Etiwanda (2–2) · prev 11	11
Cajon (2–2)	12
Alta Loma (3–1)	17

ALBANO TOP 35

Dan Albano · OC Register · Wed 9/16

Santa Margarita	1
Mater Dei	2
Yorba Linda (4–0)	11
Orange (4–0) · prev 19	18
Laguna Beach (1–3)	19

FRYER TOP 25

Steve Fryer · OC Register · Mon 9/14

Yorba Linda (4–0)	11
Orange (4–0) · second straight week	19
Laguna Beach (1–3)	20T

READING THE NUMBERS

THE KEY TO EVERY FIGURE IN THIS REPORT · SAME RULES EVERY WEEK

COMMITTEE RATING ("THE COMMITTEE'S SCALE")

The margin-based power rating from hsratings.com, formerly CalPreps. Roughly −90 to +105; zero is an average California team. This is the scale CIF-SS uses to sort playoff divisions, which is why it's the first number printed for every team. Every value carries its pull date, because it re-rates Sunday nights.

SECTION RANK · PROJECTED DIVISION

All 379 Southern Section teams sorted by committee rating. D1 is ranks 1–8, then 16 per division: D2 9–24, D3 25–40, D4 41–56, D5 57–72, and so on. "D4, 3-seed" means rank 43, third seat in the D4 band. Divisions aren't set until the regular season ends and only qualifiers get

sorted, so this is the shape of the bracket, not the bracket.

MAXPREPS RATING · SOS

MaxPreps' own power rating (about 25–105) and its strength-of-schedule figure. Heavily schedule-weighted, which is why a 0–3 team can sit high on it. The public scale. Always labeled MP, never mixed with the committee's.

THE COMPUTER'S LINE

Expected margin = home rating + 2.5 − away rating. Win probability = Φ(margin ÷ 14), where 14 points is the observed spread of high school results around the projection. A projection, never a prediction of the final score. Rick's line is Rick's.

OPP. RATING · AVERAGE OPPONENT

Each opponent's current committee rating, and the plain average across the rated ones. Teams with no rating (Locke) are excluded and said so. This is the cheapest honest measure of who you've actually played.

IE VARSITY TOP 20 · FRYER · ALBANO

Newspaper polls, printed with the writer and date. The IE poll covers Inland Empire teams; Fryer's and Albano's cover Orange County. They never rank the same teams, so a cross-poll comparison is a talking point, not a measurement.

RATING PATH

The team's committee rating at each pull this season. A jump means the team beat the computer's expectation that week; a flat line after a blowout means the computer expected the blowout.

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. Ratings: hsratings.com (committee scale), pulled 9/13 (Orange, Laguna Beach, North Torrance, Elsinore, Alta Loma) and 9/17 (Etiwanda, Norco, Cajon, Murrieta Mesa, Damien, Rancho Cucamonga, Chino Hills, Upland, Barstow). Section ordering and division lines: desk build, 9/17. MaxPreps ratings, SOS, records, player statistics: MaxPreps boards last updated 9/17; Etiwanda player stats 9/15; Orange player stats stamp Sep 13, re-read 9/17. Schedules and sites: MaxPreps team schedules (Etiwanda updated 9/15; Laguna Beach 9/12), CIF-SS schedule pages. Polls: IE Varsity Top 20 (Johnson, dailybulletin.com, 9/14, 8/31, 8/24); Fryer Top 25 (9/14); Albano Top 35 (9/16). Game reporting: Johnson 8/21 (Etiwanda–Cajon), Puente 8/28 (Murrieta Mesa–Etiwanda), Marshall 9/5 (Etiwanda–Alta Loma), all SCNG. Quotes are the newspaper's, attributed. Model: desk methodology v1.0, home field 2.5, σ = 14. Locke 62–0 (Register) vs 63–0 (MaxPreps): both printed. Norco–Etiwanda: 56–26 per the IE Varsity scoreboard, rankings, MaxPreps and CIF-SS; one IE Varsity roundup printed 56–36. Rick's picks are Rick's. School marks belong to their schools and appear here for identification in commentary.