WEEK 6 · THREE GAMES, ONE DEFENDANT, FOUR PICKS

THREE. TEN. TWO. TWELVE.

Those are San Jacinto's four winning margins. Add them up and you get 27 points across an entire season. Tonight the model likes them by 25 in a single game. One of those two numbers is lying, and we find out which one at seven o'clock.

BY BIG RICK DELGADO · FRIDAY, SEPT. 25 · POSTED BEFORE KICKOFF

THE THREE · 1

SERVITE AT DAMIEN

Computer: Servite −28.7
Rick: **Servite 35–21**

THE THREE · 2

SAN CLEMENTE AT MURRIETA VALLEY

Computer: SC −21.3
Rick: **San Clemente 31–24**

THE THREE · 3

SUMMIT AT EDISON

Computer: Edison −10.3
Rick: **Edison 31–13**

WHO IS REAL

SAN JACINTO AT AQUINAS

Computer: SJ −24.9
Rick: **San Jacinto 27–14**

LATE, AND POSTED ANYWAY.

This should have run Wednesday. It didn't. The only deadline that actually matters is that the picks go up before anybody kicks off, and they have — every number below is timestamped before 7:00 tonight and it goes on the ledger whether it makes me look smart or stupid.

Last week the computer went 2–0 on me. I'm 1–2 and I'm disagreeing with it four times tonight, which either means I learned something or I didn't.

Three. Ten. Two. Twelve. Write those down, because that is every point San Jacinto has won a football game by this season, and it is the most interesting set of numbers on tonight's card.

TIME TO FIND OUT WHO IS REAL: SAN JACINTO

Undefeated, in the Times' Southland poll at No. 24 for the first time ever, and carrying a 32.3 on the committee's scale — 28th out of 374 teams. That is a real rating. Top eight percent. Nothing soft about the schedule either: Great Oak is a 25.5 and San Jacinto won that one on the road.

So this is not the segment where I tell you a team is a fraud. I did that nine days ago and had to eat it in public on Monday. This is the one where two true things sit next to each other and refuse to agree.

THE RÉSUMÉ	RESULT	MARGIN	OPP. RATING	OPP. RANK
Beaumont	W 28–25	+3	13.7	64
King (Riverside)	W 20–10	+10	not on the scale	—
Chino Hills	W 16–14	+2	16.8	54
at Great Oak	W 40–28	+12	25.5	35
Season to date	**unbeaten**	**+27, all year**	**3 rated, avg 18.7**	**—**

Game results are from the desk's own contest log, current through Sept. 18. Opponent ratings are this morning's committee-scale pull, Sept. 25, 374 teams. Seeds and bands are my arithmetic off that ordering and not anything CIF has published; nothing is divisioned until the regular season ends.

A WHOLE SEASON OF WINNING ADDS UP TO 27 POINTS.

A 32.3 rating says one thing. A plus-27 point differential across an entire autumn says something else. Both come off the same four football games.

Tonight settles it. San Jacinto goes to San Bernardino to play a 1–3 Aquinas team rated 4.9. The model has San Jacinto by 24.9 and calls it at 96 percent. A team that genuinely belongs 28th in this section walks through that. A team that has needed a field goal and a two-point stand to stay unbeaten does not suddenly find four touchdowns it has never once found before.

Verdict: HALF-REAL. Real in their weight class. Real on the schedule. Not yet the team the standings make them sound like. **Rick: San Jacinto 27–14** — they win, and they get nowhere near the number.

> WHAT SETTLES IT
>
> Win by 25 or more tonight and I was wrong, the rating was right, and I'll say so Saturday in the same place I said this. Win by under two touchdowns for the fifth week running and the record is describing their luck instead of their team — and we talk about it again in November, when somebody in Division 3 hits them in the mouth.

THE THREE

SERVITE AT DAMIEN

Friday 7:00 · La Verne

THE COMPUTER

SERVITE −28.7

98.0%. Servite 54.5, ninth in the section. Damien 23.3, thirty-ninth.

RICK

SERVITE 35–21

Right team, and the number is a joke. Servite by 14.

Servite is 2–2 and both losses are Trinity League games, which is a sentence that means nothing bad about anybody. They are the top seed in Division 2 on the committee's scale.

Damien is 3–2 out of the Baseline. The two losses are Faith Lutheran by four and Tustin by eleven, and they beat Vista Murrieta and then put 38 on Bishop Mora Salesian on the road last Friday. That is a team playing well right now against a schedule that keeps hitting back.

Twenty-eight and a half is the model saying "one of these is a Trinity League program and one isn't." Fine. But Damien is at home, they've been in five straight competitive football games, and Servite has been getting punched since August. I'll take the Friars and I'll take the under on the beating.

SAN CLEMENTE AT MURRIETA VALLEY

Friday 7:00 · Murrieta

THE COMPUTER

SC −21.3

93.6%. San Clemente 52.4, tenth. Murrieta Valley 28.6, thirty-second.

RICK

SAN CLEMENTE 31–24

Tritons win. Twenty-one is three touchdowns too many.

San Clemente is unbeaten, eighth in the Times' Southland poll, and the two-seed in Division 2. They're good. I'm not arguing about the winner.

I am arguing about the number, because look at who Murrieta Valley has lost to. Rancho Cucamonga, 28–14, opening night. Servite, 42–10. That is a 2–2 record built entirely out of games against the 23rd and 9th teams in the section, and then they turned around and beat Cajon in a 43–38 track meet and put 41 on Roosevelt on the road.

A 2–2 team that has only lost to people rated above 34 is not a 21-point underdog at home. That's a record problem, not a team problem, and the model is reading the record.

SUMMIT AT EDISON

Friday 7:00 · Huntington Beach

THE COMPUTER

EDISON −10.3

Twenty-three spots apart. Edison 19.6 at 49, Summit 11.8 at 72.

RICK

EDISON 31–13

Same side as the computer, and I want more of it than it does.

One team is 1–3 and one team is 4–1, and I am taking the 1–3 team, which I understand is not what you came here for. Look at the schedules and then come argue with me.

Edison's strength of schedule is **48.7**. Ninth in the section out of 248 rated teams.

Now, two of those four are Pinnacle and 'Iolani, and I've got nothing for you on either one. Pinnacle's in Phoenix. 'Iolani's in Honolulu. I don't cover Phoenix. Really don't cover Honolulu.

Somebody asks me this in the mentions every week, so let's do it once. The committee's scale is a California scale. It rates California teams, on account of it exists to sort out a California bracket in November. There is nobody in Sacramento running a number on a high school in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. There's no number. There's never going to be a number. Last month a guy wanted me to tell him where a team in Texas would rank and I told him the truth, which is that I don't know and neither does anybody who's being straight with you.

So no number means no number. Not good. Not bad. Not mine.

I'm not going to make up a rating for a football team two thousand miles out into the ocean so a paragraph of mine reads a little smoother. Gorman, same deal last week. Nevada. No number. I told you that pick was all mine and then I went and missed it all by myself, nobody's fault, nothing to blame, just a guy being wrong in public on schedule.

The two that do carry a number: **Corona del Mar, twenty-second. Palos Verdes, twelfth.** You can lose three in a row and still be a problem. You just have to lose them to the right people, and the ones I'm allowed to check, Edison did.

Summit's strength of schedule is **28.3, one hundred twenty-third**. Its four wins are over teams ranked 215th, 182nd, 104th and 96th. The average opponent on that schedule rates a **minus 2.4**. And the one time Summit played somebody with a pulse — Beaumont, 64th — Summit lost. That is the whole book. **Summit's only loss is to the best team it has played.**

Nine nights ago I looked at a record, wrote a movie, and got buried by four touchdowns by a team whose schedule I never checked. I am not doing that again eight days later in the other direction. The computer has Edison by ten. I want Edison by eighteen, because a 4–1 from the Sunkist that has beaten nobody is about to find out what the last month has been for. Edison 31–13. Put it on the ledger.

WHAT I'M DOING DIFFERENTLY

Four picks and I am on the computer's side of all four winners, which has never happened here before. Every disagreement left is about the number. That's on purpose. Last week I disagreed about who wins and got buried, and the machine beat me by a quarter of a point on the one game everybody watched.

The honest lesson from that is not "keep picking against the computer." It's that the model is very good at who and much worse at how much, because it has never once seen a team play. So that is where I'm living from now on: I'll take its winner more often than I used to, and I'll fight it on the margin every single week.

Ledger's at 1–2. Saturday we find out.

THE VERDICT

HALF-REAL

San Jacinto.
Real schedule.
Not a 30-point team.

EVERY MARGIN, SAN JACINTO

Beaumont	won by 3
King (Riverside)	won by 10
Chino Hills	won by 2
at Great Oak	won by 12
Season total	**+27**
Tonight, per the model	**+24.9**

TONIGHT'S FOUR

Servite at Damien	SRV 35–21
SC at Murrieta Valley	SC 31–24
Summit at Edison	EDI 31–13
San Jacinto at Aquinas	SJ 27–14

All four disagree with the model. Three on the margin, one on the winner.

SEASON LEDGER

Computer	**2–0**
Rick	**1–2**

A pick is right if it named the winner. Margin gets argued about; margin doesn't win the row. Rule's on the method page.

NOT ON THIS CARD

Orange is idle tonight. They play at El Dorado on Oct. 2.

El Dorado hosts Troy tonight and I'm leaving it alone. I spent a week on one Orange County team and this column is supposed to be an Inland Empire column. Three of tonight's four have an IE team in them. That's the correction.

NEXT

Tonight: finals as they land, source named on each.

Saturday: The Ruling. I eat whatever I have to eat.

Sunday night: the scale re-rates and we see who moved.

SOURCES — EVERY NUMBER ABOVE, AND WHERE IT CAME FROM

RATINGS, RANKS AND DIVISION BANDS

Committee scale from hsratings.com, pulled this morning, Sept. 25 — 374 teams, all on the same value. Tonight is obviously not in it; that scale moves Sunday nights. Where I show a seed, that is me sorting that morning's list and cutting it the way the section cuts — eight at the top, then sixteen a division — and CIF has published none of it. Nobody is divisioned until the regular season ends, and only the teams that qualify get divisioned at all.

RECORDS AND GAME LOGS

The desk's warehouse game table, current through Sept. 18, built from MaxPreps contest pulls. San Jacinto, Damien, Murrieta Valley and Rancho Cucamonga logs are quoted from it directly.

TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

Remaining-schedule pull dated Sept. 19. Kickoff times are the standard 7:00 and were not individually re-verified; if a site or time is wrong, that's on the schedule file and I'll correct it.

POLL

Los Angeles Times Top 25 (Eric Sondheimer), published Sept. 20. San Clemente No. 8; San Jacinto enters at No. 24, previously unranked.

THE MODEL

Expected margin = home rating + 2.5 − away rating. Win probability = Φ(margin ÷ 14). Formula and constants on the method page, unchanged. It produces a margin and a probability for one game between two rated teams. It does not project brackets, seeds, or titles, and nothing here claims it does.

WHAT IS OPINION

Every Rick pick, the HALF-REAL verdict, and every judgment about what a team is are opinion, labeled as such, and go on the ledger to be scored Saturday.

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