With their 49-12 defeat of High Tech High/Pt. Loma, Cathedral moved to 4-0 in the Southern California South HS Varsity Gold standings, tied with Torrey Pines, who are 4-0 after beating San Pasqual 38-5.

Five teams remain undefeated in the highest divisions of the boys single-school league in SoCal, with North Division teams Wilson and Trabuco Hills sitting at 2-0 and 3-0, respectively, and La Quinta at 2-0 thanks to a 24-12 defeat of Dead Rabbits.

Things have gone fairly easy for Cathedral so far, with only Fallbrook giving them any real push (Cathedral won 33-15).

“Fallbrook was a tough game,” said Head Coach Glenn Irvine. “They’re a good team, and Torrey Pines is a good team, and we’re in a competitive division.”

This weekend the clash with Torrey Pines is set, and Irvine said everyone is looking ahead to that one.

Cathedral is led by No. 8 Drew Gaffney and High School All American prop Aaron Mitchell. Along with them are some players who are consistently improving, flanker/hooker Pat Lafontaine, hooker Brad Stiehl, and captain and flanker Alex Barton among them. Prop Joey Kuperman and the brother center pairing of Xavier Ulutu and Chris Moliga are a handful, too.

But success at Cathedral is more about an overall support from the school. The football coaches regularly attend games – even away games – and are big supporters. And Irvine said the school administration is rallying around the team.

“When 99% of you players go to college, it’s a positive thing,” he said.

Meanwhile Torrey Pines is no less impressive, as the Mustangs have given up just 17 points in four games, while scoring an average of 40. Wing Michael Cahill keeps scoring tries, while the massive forward Pierre Pretorious is an intimidating presence. Billy Maggs is slated to play for the High School All American 7s team.

“We’ve improved steadily from week to week,” Head Coach Matty Sandoval told the Rancho Santa Fe Review, “and the team is really starting to jell. Cathedral will require a lot more than they’ve been asked to give so far this season. I have faith the boys will be up for the task. They like nothing more than the challenge of playing the private school up the street.”

In the North, Wilson, defending champs and returning many of their starters look strong, and so does La Quinta. It’s hard to see any scenario where Wilson won’t win the North 1. Wilson takes on Trabuco Hills this weekend in a non-league match, and then Trabuco Hills will face La Quinta.

With La Quinta facing winless Tesoro this weekend, it looks like the Jan 26 meeting of Trabuco and La Quinta will be a clash of unbeaten teams.

Trabuco Hills Head Coach, Eric Land said the three-year-old program is coming of age, as the players who started with the team in 2010-2011 are now experienced and working well together. Captain Eric Thompson is the founder of the club and at scrumhalf their leader.

In the forwards Mitch Dixon is a High School All American at prop, while center JT Land – the coach’s nephew – is playing well.

“The three-year players are really bringing the team together,” said Land. “So each year when we get a new kid who is new to rugby, these guys get him up to speed.”

They will need to be when they take on Wilson and La Quinta in successive weekends.

Southern California runs their league a little differently from many other HS leagues in the country, and in fact they follow a model that USA Rugby would like to see more often.

Single-school teams play a short season during the winter (easy enough in Southern California). Then when the spring term starts, players go off to run track or play baseball. Those that remain in rugby join high school club teams, with many of those clubs drawing from one or two single-school teams.