



Carrying together there boot to the water to prepare the race



San Diego Crew Classic Showcases Local Talent

By Jaime Zepeda

There is no reason to think that Lamorinda high school athletes only excel in the area. The recent San Diego Crew Classic gave local high school athletes, and high school graduates, the opportunity to flex their rowing muscles. The San Diego Crew Classic is one of the most anticipated rowing competitions of the year. Attended in great numbers, the Classic showcases some of the best collegiate, master, and junior rowing programs in the country, like USC, UCSD, Notre Dame, and Stanford, to name a few.

Representing the Lamorinda area were female and male athletes that have joined the Oakland Strokes junior rowing program, which competes throughout the year. In the Women's Varsity-8, the Oakland Strokes tried to win the Gilman-Mulliken Cup for the third year in a row. Unfortunately, a very competitive Maritime team, from Connecticut, won the Cup, in their first appearance at the Classic. The Women's Varsity-8 team performed very well, and came in at fourth place with a time of 7:26.56. Some of the key players were Lamorinda's own Alzizah Koorji (Miramonte) at coxswain, Julie Jones (Acalanes), Jessica Cherry (Campolindo), and Pia Hauch (Bentley).

Also, in the Women's Junior Varsity-8, the Oakland Strokes proved to be a team to watch, qualifying for the finals with the fastest time in the preliminary. After a foggy delay, the Women's JV team faced stiff competition, and was unable to repeat their stellar performance in the preliminaries. They came in at fifth place with a time of 7:27.43, losing the ZLAC Rowing Club Trophy to Los Gatos. Lamorinda was very well represented, thanks to Anne Rutherford (Bentley), Kendall Sandy (Miramonte), and Brittany Beck (Miramonte), and their stellar performances.

On the men's side, they found themselves against tough competition as well, but maintained their poise in their pursuit of the Gilman-Mulliken Cup. For the Men's Varsity-8, the race was a tight one, with

no team obtaining a definite lead until the last leg. Capital barely edged ahead of everyone, winning the very competitive race. The Oakland Strokes came in at fourth place, with a time of 6:36.85. Among the Lamorinda athletes in the team were TJ Laher (Miramonte), Monte Melnick (Orinda Academy), James Lenczowski (Miramonte), Michael Luecker (Campolindo), and Mac Farrell (Bentley).

The Junior Varsity team faired better than their Varsity teammates. The Men's JV team took third place in a highly competitive race, with a time of 6:40.57. Some of the star rowers were Alex Topacio (Campolindo) at coxswain, Garrett Bell (Las Lomas), Nathan Carbajal (De La Salle), Cole Williams (Campolindo), Brent Watson (Miramonte), and Robert Chan (Miramonte).

Some former local high school athletes made an appearance at the event, but as a part of their university team. UCLA's Women's Novice crew team came in at first place at the Women's Novice-8 event, with impressive performances by Danielle Piccinini (Carondelet graduate), Ann Schier (Miramonte graduate), and Lily Sakkis (Campolindo graduate). Thanks to their great performances, UCLA was able to beat out Oregon State and Cal by a slim margin, making the Lamorinda community proud.





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