

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Varsity Rugby Starts Season Strong with 6 Straight Wins

By Chris Roberts

The Lamorinda Rugby Club varsity boys came out strong this season taking the championship title at two SoCal tournaments, then shutting out Santa Rosa in their first pre-season home game for a combined 6 wins and no losses.

SLO/Arroyo Grande Tournament: The first tournament games of the season were held at Arroyo Grande during the weekend of Jan. 19, 20. Despite starting at 6 a.m. from Lafayette, the boys came out strong in Game one against a good Southern Orange County (SOC) team. Evan Schlinkert scored the first try of the season two minutes into the match. SOC came out stronger in the second half and finally broke through for a try and 2 point conversion, but Lamo played a strong defense to shut down SOC for the remainder of the match resulting in a 14-7 win.

Game two of the Arroyo Grande tournament pitted Lamo against the local Mutineers RFC. Punishing tries by Cole Huntley, Kurt Drinkwater and others gave Lamo the edge as they loosened up and handily won this match by a score of 28-5.

Game three was against the SLO Hearts. Charlie Smith began with a try three minutes into the first half. AJ Taylor

against a tough SLO defense added up to a 17-0 win for Lamo.

Day two of the Arroyo Grande tournament was a single

hung on for a 14-12 victory. Bo Richter's perfect 2-for-2 conversion kicks were ultimately the difference.

UCLA /"Pac 10" Tournament: On a stormy Friday, Jan. 25, the team and coaches loaded the bus for a long, wet ride to the UCLA hosted "Pac 10" tournament. At 7:30 a.m., the barely rested boys ran onto the UCLA pitch invigorated by the sunny Saturday morning and the opportunity to play a "proper" rugby match in the mud! They kicked off to a physically imposing squad from Silicon Valley, but Lamo immediately showed their speed and passing skills, continually stringing out the Sil-



"finals" game against a depleted yet spry SOC team that fought



hard all the way to avenge their earlier loss to Lamo. Goals by Grant Hyjer and Junior Vei

icon Valley defense. Final score was 39-0. The university coaches from Cal, UCLA, Oregon and Washington all complimented Lamorinda's outstanding level of team play and individual skill sets.

Santa Rosa is Shut Out: On a cold and rainy Saturday, Feb. 2, Lamorinda Varsity shut out the powerful Santa Rosa Panthers at Miramonte. Coming Up: Be there for the season opener against De La Salle this Saturday, Feb. 9, at Miramonte High School. You can go to www.lamorugby.com for the complete frosh and varsity schedules.



scored his first try of the season in the 11 minute. As the match wore on, persistent offense

within the first 12 minutes was all the scoring that Lamo could muster but it was enough as they

Cougars Rout Las Lomas in Girls Soccer, 5-0

By Jennifer Wake



#10 senior Moira Heath

Photo Gavin Schlissel

The Campolindo girls soccer team continued to roll with their third win in a week after knocking out Las Lomas, 5-0, on the Knights' home turf Wednesday, Jan. 30.

Junior Erin Bricker had an outstanding performance

for Campo, scoring four of the evening's five goals, with assists from sophomore Kaelyn Caspillo, senior Caroline Helfrich, sophomore Sara Tomas, and senior Moira Heath. Heath had the other Campolindo score, with an unassisted goal.

The Cougars finished the game at No. 2 (11-3-1) in the DFAL standings behind No. 1 Miramonte. Campolindo will travel to face Miramonte at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 8.



Photo Gavin Schlissel

Local Grad Student/Coach Reaches Out to Kids with Special Needs

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"The goal for my team was to get Spencer the ball so he could make his first shot. When the ball came to him, everyone shouted to shoot it, but he missed. The whole crowd groaned," Verducci said. "Even the players from Stanley understood. When they received the rebound, they would pass it to Spencer because they wanted to be part of the moment also."

Finally after a few more failed attempts, the ball went in. "There was a huge roar from the crowd. It was like the 49ers had just won the Super Bowl."

After the season ended, Verducci created a program called "We Believe - Every Little Bit Helps," to bring that same excitement to more children with developmental disabilities. On Jan. 19, Verducci invited 19 children with special needs and their families to join him at Saint Mary's College for dinner, to cheer on the

Gaels men's basketball team, and participate in the half-time free-throw program.

Word spread since then. Last Saturday, nearly 50 people donning "We Believe" t-shirts attended the SMC game. Six volunteers helped out: four Saint Mary's students and two Campolindo High School students - including Jacob Moebius, a former OIS basketball player. "This is a chance for these children to do things every child should do," Verducci said. "We hope to take trips to San Francisco, Sacramento, go to science museums and have days in the park. We don't want to do just sports because not all the children are into sports."

Verducci donated the money for the tickets and t-shirts for the first two events, and hopes to get financial support from local businesses in the future. The SMC athletic department gave Verducci discounted tickets and the SMC

food services director, Matt Carrol, provided the pre-game meal at no charge. "It showed me that Saint Mary's supports me 100 percent."

"I knew there was a need for programs for these children, but after the children and parents showed up for the first event, I realized how big the need was," Verducci said. "After the game I had a handful of parents just shaking my hand and asking how to join. They think I have touched these children's lives, but as I have learned, it is these children who have touched mine."

On Jan. 30, the OIS Bulldogs held their home opener and Verducci continued his tradition of inclusion. Two new players (both with special needs) sit among the others, uniforms on, ready to play.

For more information about the We Believe program, contact Andrew Verducci at lilducci@aol.com.

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