

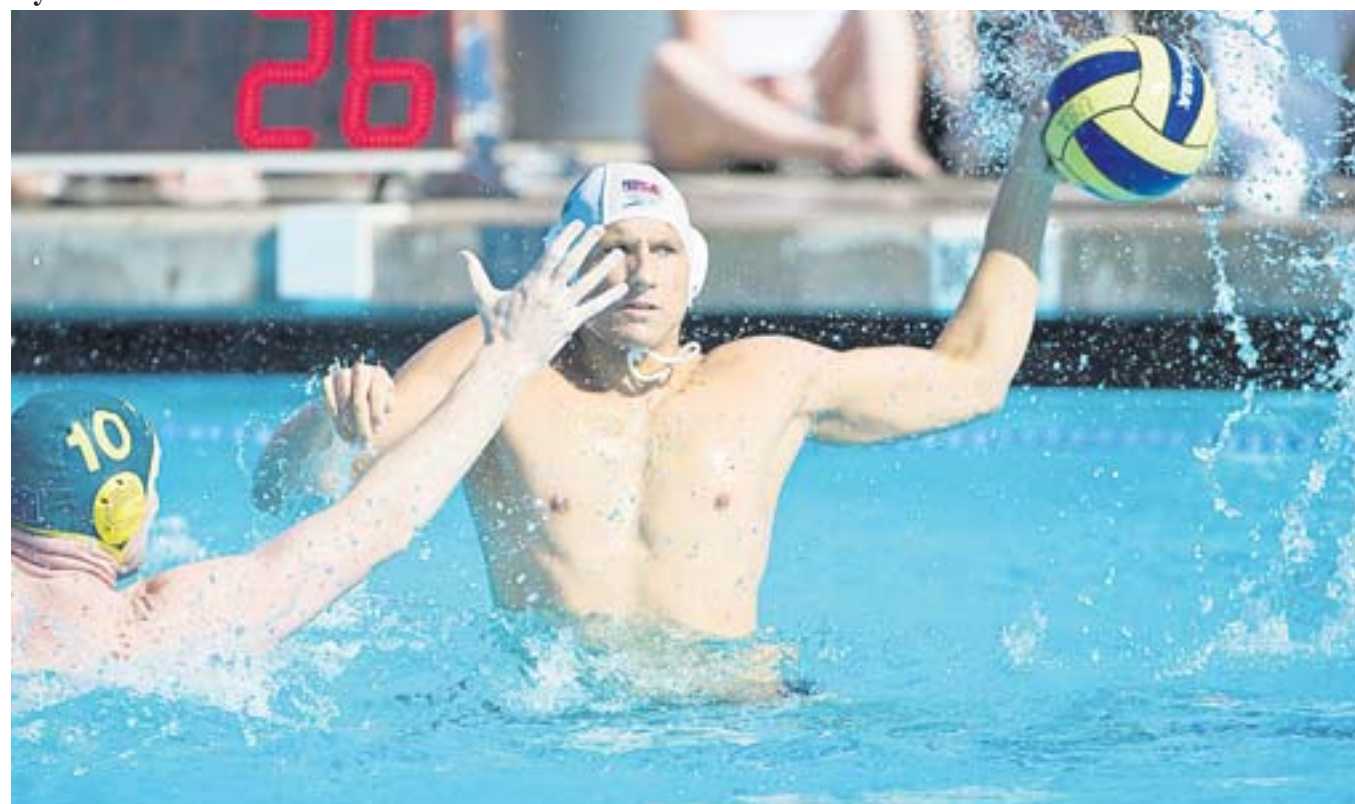


# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

### Local Water Polo Standout Plays Back At Home

By Jack Fernbacher



Peter Verellas



Photo Robert Johnson Jenny White, a member of the 50 and over group, on team Soda Moms Photo Robert Johnson



Peter Verellas surrounded by the youth

Photo Doug Kohen

After months of traveling around the world, one water polo standout got the rare chance to play in his hometown with the Senior National Men's Water Polo team. Campolindo graduate Peter Verellas played with the national team against Australia in familiar water at the Soda Aquatic Center at Campolindo High School on June 7.

"It was really great to be back," said Verellas, who has been playing professional Water Polo in Italy for the past couple of years. "As a national team, we don't get many chances to play in the United States. It was nice to be at home, see all the familiar faces, and literally sleep in my own house."

In the game, the United States got off to a roaring start as captain and Stanford graduate Tony Azevedo scored two early goals and led the team to a 4-0 lead at

halftime. The United States held on to the lead to defeat Australia 6-4 in front of a sold out crowd at the Aquatic Center.

"We were favored to beat Australia, but it always feels nice to win," said Verellas. "It was really awesome to see the younger players and fans supporting us at the game."

The United States National Team came into the Australia game with momentum after beating the reigning world champion Croatia 8-5. Currently the United States is ranked ninth, so the victory over Croatia was a big win.

The Olympic squad for the United States will only have thirteen players and right now the national team consists of eighteen players. The final thirteen will be determined later in June and Verellas hopes to be headed for Beijing.

"Our team is headed off to

Europe right now to play other national teams," said Verellas. "Then, we will train back in the U.S., and all I can do is try my hardest and hope for the best."

At the introduction of the game, players of the Lamorinda Water Polo Club team surrounded Verellas as the announcer listed off his numerous accomplishments. At the end of the welcoming speech, the announcer inducted Verellas as the first ever player into the Lamorinda Water Polo Hall of Fame.

"The special intro was awesome and made me think about how many people helped me get to where I am," said Verellas. "When I started, there was no avenue for any players to play before high school. Lamorinda has been a huge part of my development as a player and I got to where I am because of all the people who helped me."



Team Soda Moms, 3rd place National Championship USA Waterpolo, 50 and over age group From Left to Right: Front Row, Kneeling: Connie Miller, Jenny White, Ann Bundy, Jane Allen, Back Row, Standing: Deborah Simmons, Mary Ann Ellsworth, Jerilyn Moore, Carole Lynn, Jeannie Johnson, Pauline Dorr, Linda Buchanan, Anni Minuzzo, Patty Trenkwalder; Back Row: Coach Andrew Morris Photo Robert Johnson

### Lamorinda Soda Moms Place at Water Polo Tournament

By Jack Fernbacher

Most women water polo players throw in their towels after high school, but a select few Lamorinda moms have kept playing into their 50s. The Lamorinda teams called the H2O Soda Moms have one team consisting of women 40 and older and another team of women 50 years and older.

From June 6-8, the Soda Moms competed in the Masters Nationals tournament at the Soda Aquatic Center at Campolindo High School. The 40's team won three games on Friday and Saturday, and

made it into the Championship game. In the championship game, the team lost to the Oakland Grayhairs and placed second in the tournament.

The 50's team won three games and lost two to place third in the field. Playing against nationally ranked teams like the Fighting Flamingos, the 50's team didn't give up in any of its games.

"We were down by 11 at half-time," recalls a member of the 50's team Jane Allen of her game against the Flamingos. "Our coach Andrew Morris told us not to give and keep

playing hard."

The Soda Moms didn't give up and beat the Flamingos by one goal in the second half.

In the whole Masters tournament, there were 23 women teams of four age groups: 20+, 30+, 40+, and 50+. Though there weren't as many fans at the Soda Mom's games then there was at the Men's National team game against Australia, the team was having fun and the true fans including family and friends came to support them at their games.

**Download "Your" story from**  
**www.lamorindaweekly.com**

**Sherman Swim School** *skills for life*  
Since 1961  
swimming: infants thru adults  
diving: beginning thru advanced  
private & semi-private classes in 90° water

sessions begin every 3 weeks  
M-W-F or T-Th  
day and evening classes

Available to rent for parties!

New Winter Classes  
Beginning this Year!  
Nov. 2008 -Feb. 2009

Voted "Family Favorite" by the Bay Area Parent Magazine  
925-283-2100 1075 Carol Lane • Lafayette (off Mt. Diablo)  
www.shermanswim.com

**Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm**

93 Moraga Road, Suite #103  
Orinda, CA 94563  
925•254•0505

To learn more about Village Associates or to preview our listings please visit:  
**www.villageassociates.com**