

Local Beijing Bound Athletes Prepare for Olympics

By Jack Fernbacher

Jeff Stevens

Joining Varellas and Vandenberg, Stevens is one of three graduates of Campolindo from the class of 2002. Stevens, a right handed pitcher from Berkeley, is a part of the historic USA baseball team. Currently, baseball is not scheduled for the 2012 Olympics so Stevens could be a part of the last Olympic USA baseball team. Stevens has been playing Triple-A ball in Buffalo for the Cleveland Indians this season.

Grace Upshaw

Upshaw is the lone Acalanes graduate competing in Beijing. She qualified for the long jump competition at the Olympic trials in Oregon. Jumping 6.88 m, Upshaw placed second in the trials to make it to her second Olympics. Upshaw went to the 2004 Olympic Games where she placed 10th. Upshaw graduated from Acalanes in 1993 and Cal-Berkeley in 1979.

Nicole Branagh

Branagh, a Miramonte graduate from the class of 1997, finished strong at the end of the Beach Volleyball qualifying to capture her first Olympic bid. Joined by her partner Youngs, the number-five ranked duo in the World are aiming for a medal.

Heather Petri

Petri is competing in her third Olympics with the Women's Water Polo team. Graduating from the class of 1996 from Miramonte, she has helped the US receive the World's number one ranking. She is aiming for her first gold medal in Olympic competition.

Natalie Coughlin

World record holder (100 yard backstroke) Natalie Coughlin grew up in Lafayette and graduated from Carondelet High in Concord in 2000. This will be the Cal grad's second Olympic appearance. Coughlin came home from Athens in 2004 with two Gold medals, two Silver and one Bronze.