

# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

### Saint Mary's Opens Lacrosse with a Loss

By Mikaela Crowles



SMC freshman Juliet Munroe scores one of her three goals against Albany, recording her first SMC career hat-trick

The Saint Mary's women's lacrosse team dropped their season opener on February 15, losing to the Albany Great Danes, 14-9, in Moraga. The newly painted field included the initials JAM beside the Gaels bench, in memory of freshman teammate Jenny Martinez, who died mid-December in a car crash in Colorado.

On the swampy field in the torrential downpour of the Moraga Hills, the Gaels struggled with pass completion and dropped several balls. The Danes took advantage of Saint Mary's mistakes early and were the first to score, taking a quick lead 2-0 with goals from Kayla Best and Julie Bush.

Before the game, head coach Lauren Uhr said: "I think we're a lot faster this year. We've spent a lot of time in preseason working on stick work and footwork. I think it's really going to pay off."

And it did. The Gaels worked out their early jitters, improving their stick control as senior midfielder P.J. Hainley scored off an assist from

Maggie Schwab.

As the first half continued, the Gaels went back and forth with the Danes. Saint Mary's went into the break 5-7, advantage Albany, but still holding on to a chance to win.

Best earned her final goal of the game with 23:12 left, bumping the Albany lead 5-8. Hainley wasn't finished and answered with back-to-back goals cutting the deficit to 8-7 Albany with just 18:53 left on the clock.

In the remaining minutes of the game the Danes kept Hainley's touches to minimum, as she finished the game with four goals and two assists. The rain did not let up, and Saint Mary's execution suffered severely.

"Most of the girls were complaining about their hands being cold," said Coach Uhr. "I definitely think the weather affected us."

Albany continued their attack with four more goals, extending their lead to 12-7. Hainley attributed this turn of play to "a couple critical [Saint Mary's] drops, which changed the whole game's dynamic."

Photo Andy Scheck

Freshman Juliet Munroe scored with 3:36 left on the clock. Any hope for a Gaels comeback was squashed when Albany's Christine Grueniger scored her second goal of the game with 1:20 to go. Munroe snuck in a final goal for Saint Mary's with just 23 seconds left, giving the Gaels a 5-goal loss.

Coming off last year's 2-16 "building" season, the Gaels have high hopes for the 2009 season. Junior goalkeeper Hilary Gardner said, "We played 30 solid minutes. Now we just have to play 60."

Coach Uhr is confident the Gaels will perform well this season. She said they learned a lot about themselves in the first game, adding: "We really have to focus on defending inside out and taking the shoots we know we can make. Those are the things the will help us win."

The road may have started out rocky for these Lady Gaels, but Coach Uhr believes that Jenny's death has "brought the girls closer together and forced them to realize not to take anything for granted."

### DFAL Wrestlers Advance to NCS



Miramonte's Sam Worth and Campolindo's Matt Kurkjian shake hands before battling

Pictured at Campolindo on February 21, Miramonte's Sam Worth battles Campolindo's Matt Kurkjian at 135 pounds, in the only local match-up of the DFAL Championship final rounds. Worth won by decision, 7-1, but both wrestlers were among the 17 local wrestlers who advanced to the NCS Championship, held at Newark Memorial High School last weekend, by placing top three DFAL in their weight class. These included (by school):

- Acalanes: O'Herin (1st-160), Rule (1st-215), Rudin (2nd-140), Royster (2nd-189), Campo: Jackson (1st-125), Flowers (2nd-119), Toupin (2nd-130), Kurkjian (2nd-135), Robinson (2nd-145), Caspillo (3rd-103), Vehar (3rd-160), Angelides (3rd-189) and Field (3rd-285).
- Miramonte: Worth (1st-135), Ericson (2nd-152), Pummer (2nd-215), Birss (3rd-140)

### SMC Men's Basketball Wraps Up 2nd Place In WCC

The Saint Mary's men defeated Loyola Marymount 68-55 last Saturday evening to finish second in the West Coast Conference (WCC) standings. The Gaels' next stop is the WCC Tournament in Las Vegas on Sunday, March 8.

Four Gaels hit double-digits in

the win. Carlin Hughes paced the Gaels with 16 points, as he finished the game shooting 6-of-12 overall, while making four 3-pointers. Hughes also added six rebounds and a game-high five assists in his final regular season game as a Gael.

Senior Diamon Simpson had

15 points and a game-high 12 rebounds, while Wayne Hunter and Omar Samhan had 11 and 10 points respectively. Samhan finished the game with 10 points and 10 rebounds for his 12th double-double of the season and 19th of his career.

L. Borrowman



The Campolindo Junior Varsity Girls won the DFAL championship on Friday, February 20, beating Acalanes 58 - 40. The JV girls are coached by Scott Anderson and Bob Francis. The players are: Krissy Lukins, Meghan Nelson (co-captain), Annelise Ito, Erin Nakahara, Allison Shulenberger, Ruthie Shapiro (co-captain), Rachel Kaufman, Katie MacLeod, Adrienne Moore, and Tessa Cunha (two freshman players, at left, Nicole Forbes and Melissa McCue, joined in the final victory game)

Submitted by Tina Brier

## Communication – A Key to Finding the Right Collegiate Athletic Program

By Chris Strausser, Founder of Getting in Edu

*Editor's note: Lafayette resident Chris Strausser's new venture, Getting in Edu, focuses on providing high school student athletes and their parents direct access to the expert advice of today's college coaches and admissions officers. Lamorinda Weekly asked Strausser to share collective insight from his interviews with these experts about the importance of communication to the successful transition from high school to college athlete. For more info, go to GettingInEdu.com.*

A big myth of collegiate athlete recruiting is that the process starts on July 1st of an athlete's senior year. But wait until then to start thinking about collegiate opportunities, and expect disappointment.

Bret Simon, head coach of the Stanford men's soccer team offers this warning to high school athletes: "Waiting to be discovered is one of the most common mistakes high school student-athletes make today."

By July 1st of their senior year many top athletes have already made verbal commitments to athletic programs. That's because successful communication between athletes and collegiate programs starts much earlier. The key is that contact is initiated by the athlete, conversation that's legal because the NCAA allows coaches to return emails, speak on the phone (with restrictions), and meet during unofficial campus visits.

That's not to say that coaches aren't looking for top athletes before they hear from them. They are looking – often at younger players. Today's coaches say they are doing more research, watching more high school sophomores compete, trying to find talent before other coaches do. But time and recruiting funds are limited. Top athletes have choices. It's a better allocation of resources, coaches say, to focus on athletes who genuinely want to go to their particular school. Even coaches with travel budgets that allow them to attend showcase tournaments and camps often focus only on those kids that have already expressed interest in their school and athletic program.

So how does an athlete make that early contact? Email works best. But know -- what you write, questions you ask, even grammar – it all makes a difference. And here's the challenge – there are no specific rules. Each school and coach is different. The best advice? Be genuine. Study that school's programs. Ask

pertinent questions. Don't pester. And, if there's a video of the athlete, ask before sending.

Some coaches only want to be sent a link to a YouTube video clip. Others, like Cathy Swezey, head coach of the Vanderbilt women's lacrosse team, don't look at videos at all because, says Swezey, they don't tell you how coachable a kid is, how they respond to mistakes, and what kind of teammate they are.

If the biggest mistake a high school athlete can make is waiting to be discovered, the biggest mistake his or her parent can make is narrowing the search focus.

"Too many parents make scholarship (money) the highest priority, and put too much pressure on their child to focus on the scholarship schools," says Jenny McDowell, head coach of the 2008 National Champion Emory women's volleyball team.

The problem, coaches and admissions personnel say, is that narrowing that focus ignores the student's needs – what's the best educational, social and geographic fit. All things that make college a successful overall experience.

And then there are the parents who over-manage the process, giving decision makers the wrong impression.

Kevin Dyerly, Director of Admission at Whitman College says: "Nothing drives admissions officers more nuts than hearing from parents the word 'we.' Each year we hear from parents, 'We did the application,' 'we'll send the common application supplement,' and 'we'd like to set-up an interview.' Of course, this doesn't help or reflect well on the child."

And it's not only admissions officers who notice.

Coaches coach athletes, not their parents. They want athletes who are passionate about their sport, fully committed to what a particular school's sports program has to offer.

It doesn't matter whether Mom or Dad are die-hard alums.

Says Felix Mercado, head water polo coach at Brown University: "Too many parents put their interests ahead of their child's. We, as coaches, usually see through it. I can tell the kid who is genuinely excited about Brown from the one who is considering it because their parents want them to."

Successful early communication? It begins with honest discussion between parent and athlete, and involves the college coach sooner than you might think.

Avoid disappointment. Start those conversations now.

**Send sports stories and ideas to:**  
sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com or call 925-377-0977

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