



Rugby Can Help Meet College Goals

Written with information provided by Lamorinda Rugby



Zack Purdy, lifted by Cole Huntley (front) and David Eastman, wins this "line out," in Lamo Rugby's February win against De La Salle, 51-0

Photo by Karen Drinkwater

Throughout high school, Miramonte's Zack Purdy and Campolindo's Ty Fach, now seniors, battled on the football field. Then at football season's end, they joined forces, playing together for the Lamorinda Rugby Field Club (Lamo Rugby), the largest rugby club in the United States.

Both athletes chose their intended collegiate sport based on love of the game - rugby. But that choice, says Lamo Rugby president Tony McKenzie, can help achieve college goals.

Last year, 12 Lamo Rugby players joined college rugby programs. Six now play rugby for Cal, a team that's won 24 of the last 28 NCAA national championships. Two play for Saint Mary's, a program consistently ranked top 10 nationally.

"These kids are getting the opportunity to get into great schools that they probably would not be able

to attend without their rugby credentials," says McKenzie.

Purdy joined Lamo Rugby just three seasons ago to take a break from varsity basketball and water polo.

Says Purdy: "I loved rugby immediately. It is a sport of continuous action and hitting that is just made for me. I love the fact that everyone gets to run the ball as well as play both offense and defense."

Ty Fach, Lamo Rugby's player president, received his first rugby ball at nine while visiting England, where rugby has near national sport status (behind cricket). He was an instant fan. A few years later, Fach discovered that John Dixon, an MOL coach, was also involved with Lamo Rugby's youth program. Fach signed up and, according to family lore, "never looked back."

Rugby is one of the oldest collegiate sports in the United States,

dating locally to 1882 at Cal and 1888 at SMC, whose website calls it a game of "elegant violence." Players hit and tackle hard, like football, but without pads and helmets.

Purdy and Fach got a taste of rugby's international popularity last summer on a Lamo Rugby trip to New Zealand, where rugby is the national sport and professional games are often played in filled-to-capacity stadiums that rival the American pro football experience.

"The first professional Super 14 Rugby game that we saw in Auckland was spectacular," said Fach. "I love the speed and power of the game. It is amazing how big and athletic those pro rugby players are."

Lamo Rugby's 350 members aren't all super-sized. But there are speed players like Campo's "Rocket" Rodriguez and Las Lomas star running back Chase Herring who fill out the 15-man varsity team.

Lamo Rugby doesn't make cuts, says McKenzie, even for high school players. Everyone plays some. How much depends on experience and capability. Kids as young as 1st grade play in youth leagues.

"Rugby is a game for all," says McKenzie.

Fach is waiting to hear from engineering programs and plans to play rugby in college.

Purdy has verbally committed to Cal's rugby program, along with Lamo Rugby teammate Cole Huntley, a former fullback on San Ramon Valley's football team.

In college, rugby is typically a club sport, with few scholarship opportunities nationwide. Cal rugby player families pay tuition, though they can access the same financial aid opportunities as any Cal student. At Cal, rugby players live in the athlete dorm and can access the school's athletic department advantages, including personal academic tutors.

And then there's the key to that an all-important door - admissions department attention.

In today's competitive college environment, that's arguably a game-winning goal.

For more rugby information, go to lamorugby.com

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Bishop O'Dowd Falls to Local Champs in Boys and Girls NCS Soccer Finals

Dons and Lady Mats Take Section Titles



The Acalanes Dons had been ranked #2 going into Saturday's game against #1 Bishop O'Dowd, but a scoreless game with two overtime periods ended in a 5-3 victory by the Dons after a penalty kick fest. Goalie Logan Spittler had 6 saves, while Reuben Komisar, Nate Sonnenthal, Coleman Ruffin, Sasha Chalak and Nic Carrillo nailed penalty kicks.

(Pictured: Shasha Chalak #17, playing at home in January)

Photo Doug Kohen



The Lady Mats captured the NCS title last Saturday as the team, ranked #2, defeated the top-seed Bishop O'Dowd Dragons 4-0. A hat-trick by junior forward McKenna deBack (pictured in an earlier game) and an early point by senior Elaine Tanski brought the Mats their second straight section title.

Photo Robert Johnson

 For up to date schedules see: www.smcgaels.com			
Home Games	Time	Event	Opponent
Fri, March 6	2:00 PM	Baseball	Sacramento
	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Santa Clara
	4:00 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Stanford
Sat, March 7	1:00 PM	Baseball	Sacramento
Mon, March 9	2:00 PM	Women's Tennis	Penn
Wed, March 11	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Alabama-Birmingham
Thurs, March 12	1:00 PM	Softball	Northern Illinois
	3:00 PM	Softball	Northern Illinois
	3:30 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Robert Morris
Fri, March 13	3:00 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Sat, March 14	11:00 AM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
	2:30 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Sun, March 15	1:00 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Tue, March 17	2:00 PM	Softball	Princeton
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
Wed, March 18	1:00 PM	Softball	Cornell
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
	3:00 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Colgate
	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Northern Colorado
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
Fri, March 20	3:00 PM	Softball- Invitational	Central Connecticut
Sat, March 21	11:00 AM	Women's Tennis	Boise State

VARSITY HOME GAME Calendar ••• High School Varsity @ Home •••			
Wednesday, March 4	Tuesday, March 10	Monday, March 16	Thursday, March 19
Boys Basketball - NCS Semi-final Piner @ Miramonte, 7:30pm Softball Albany @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Boys Lacrosse Livermore @ Campolindo, 7pm	Boys Tennis Miramonte @ Acalanes, 3pm Boys Lacrosse Clayton Valley @ Campolindo, 7pm De La Salle @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse San Ramon Valley @ Acalanes, 7pm	Baseball El Cerrito @ Acalanes, 4pm Tuesday, March 17 Boys Tennis Las Lomas @ Campolindo, 3pm Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 3pm Softball Acalanes @ Campolindo, 4pm (Scrimmage) Boys Lacrosse Campolindo @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse Las Lomas @ Acalanes, 7pm Miramonte @ Campolindo 7pm	Boys Tennis Dougherty Valley @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Softball Dublin @ Campolindo, 4pm
Thursday, March 5 Boys Tennis Campolindo @ Miramonte, 3pm	Thursday, March 12 Boys Lacrosse San Rafael @ Campolindo, 7pm	Wednesday, March 18 Baseball Washington High @ Campolindo, 3:30pm Boys Volleyball Campolindo @ Miramonte, 6pm Girls Lacrosse Acalanes @ Miramonte, 7pm	Friday, March 20 Baseball Albany @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dougherty Valley @ Acalanes, 3:45pm Boys Lacrosse Miramonte @ Acalanes, 7pm Boys Volleyball Miramonte @ Acalanes, 6pm
Friday, March 6 Baseball College Park @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dublin @ Acalanes, 3:45pm Girls Lacrosse Monte Vista @ Acalanes, 5:30pm	Friday, March 13 Baseball Riordon @ Campolino, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 3:45pm Boys Lacrosse Amador Valley @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse Davis @ Acalanes, 7pm		
Saturday, March 7 Girls Basketball - NCS Championship See cifncs.org for details Boys Basketball - NCS Championship See cifncs.org for details			

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