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Published March 18th, 2009

## Lamorinda Dominates CYO Diocese Championship Play

By Robin Schoettler Fox

In box scores of Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) results, Lamorinda did well in basketball this year, sending more than a dozen teams to the 2009 Oakland Diocese play-offs and taking home five championship titles, girls and boys combined. Teams representing grades 4 through 8 earned berths to the single-elimination Oakland Diocese bracket championship playoffs by winning local league and/or tournament play.

"With over 1200 basketball teams in CYO this year, to have five diocese champions (from Lamorinda) is an accomplishment," says Bill Ford, CYO Director for the Diocese of Oakland.

St. Perpetua's (St. P) 6th grade Panthers, coached by Rob O'Reilly and Ed Saribay, avenged last year's 5th grade double-over time championship game loss to Christ the King (Pleasant Hill) by beating essentially the same players in this year's final game, 42-40. "They're league rivals and they've had our number all season long," said Coach O'Reilly. "We needed our best performance of the season to beat them and we got it today. Coming into this game, I had a good feeling about our chances because each one of our players improved over the season, and things were really coming together for us in our playoff run."

The 7th grade championship games looked like a local contest, as Lamorinda teams faced each other in the final girls and boys games. Santa Maria's 7th grade girls beat St. Perpetua, 42-27. On the boys' side, St. Perpetua took the title, beating St. Monica's, 56-42. Panther Coach Mike Cassidy said their Moraga rival was tough competition, had been throughout league play. "Saint Monica's was the only team that beat us all season," said Cassidy. The Panthers, though, were particularly motivated to repeat the team's 2008 diocese championship because they'd dedicated the 2009 season to their former coach, the late Ken Nelson, who succumbed to cancer just prior to the season's start.

Two other local CYO teams also now hold 2009 diocese championship titles: Santa Maria's 4th grade girls team, coached by Kelly Sopak and Sue Ellen Thomas, won the girl's East Diocese championship by beating Holy Rosary (Union City), 28-16, in the final game. St. Perpetua's 5th grade Lady Panthers, coached by Alan Ikeya and Bret Asterlind, beat St. Catherine (Martinez), 32-30.



St. P's 6th grade Champions: Seated: Casey Harrington. Standing (left to right): Coach Ed Saribay, Zach Stromberg, Tyler Petite, Joey Hewitt, Matt O'Reilly, Kevin Hull, Scotty Fox, Head Coach Rob O'Reilly, Sam de Roque, and Calvin Saribay. Not Pictured: Kian Simpson Photo Teresa Saribay



St. Perpetua and St. Monica 7th grade players share post championship game smiles. Front row (left to right, St. P's in black; St. Monica in white) Andrew Zolintakis, Andrew Cassidy, Isaac Christian, John Lauth, Justin Dunn, Matt Thomas. Middle row: Walter Brennan, Zach Kisner, Alec Weber, Luke Hoyle, Mathew Gong, Even Raff, David Ortego, Jr., Denis Karas. Back Row: Coach Eric Smith (St. Mo), Ryan Smith, Grand Sivesind, Daniel Zur, Head Coach David Ortega (St. Mo) and Coach Mike Cassidy (St. P). Not pictured: Coach Steve Lauth (St. P) Photo Ken Kisner

Reach the reporter at: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

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