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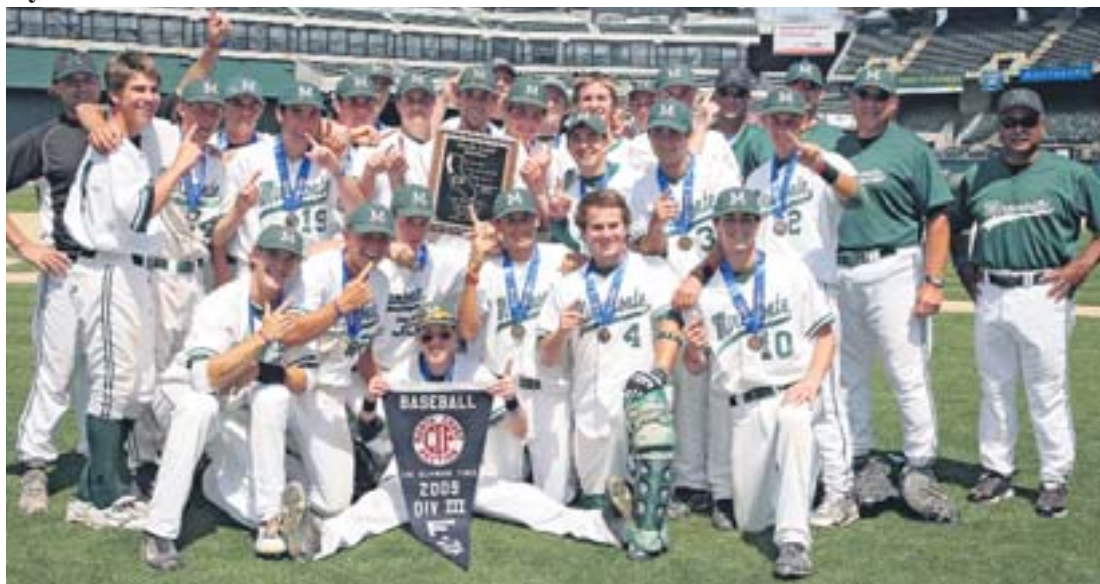


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SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Miramonte Wins 2009 North Coast Baseball Championship

By Kevin D. Shallat



2009 NCS Baseball Champions Miramonte Matadors

Photo Jordan Fong

It was an emotional week for the Miramonte varsity baseball team going into the North Coast Section (NCS) Baseball Championship game on May 30, as well as a tough week for the school and community altogether. Merely one week earlier, Miramonte lost a student, Joseph Loudon, who was close to some of the players on the team. The players

had to deal with some very real life occurrences that make the idea of sport seem less important. However, the players had a game to play. "Joe (Loudon) was at our game on Friday, right before he passed. That kind of made us realize that what we were doing was more important than just for ourselves, it was for the community. It made us play with a

little bit of purpose, and lot of togetherness," said shortstop Mike Reuvekamp.

For Miramonte Head Coach Vince Dell 'Aquila, competing in an NCS championship game was nothing new. He had coached the 1999 and 2002 championship teams that played at the Oakland Coliseum, as well as the 2004 and 2005 teams that won it all as well. The 2009 team had earned a 20-3-1 record to advance to the NCS Championship game at the Oakland Coliseum against the Sir Francis Drake Pirates (20-5).

But for the players, who have never experienced the loss of a friend, to play in a big league ballpark, or compete in a state championship game, this was all new to them. Behind a masterful performance from their starting pitcher, Miramonte pulled off a 1-0 victory to record their fifth NCS championship in 10 years.

Despite being the one seed, the Matadors lost the coin toss and had to accept the visiting team designation. This, as it turned out, was a blessing in disguise, as the Mata-

dors displayed some early pop with their bats. Miramonte's Kevin Paulsen led off the first inning with a base hit to left and advanced to second on a passed ball. The next batter was Reuvekamp, who scorched a grounder up the middle that caromed off of the pitcher's leg to score Paulsen from second. The atmosphere in the dugout and stands became loud with an anticipation of more runs, but the game was destined for a pitcher's duel.

The Pirates gave the Matadors a scare in the bottom of the first, as they looked to answer right back in the same fashion. Drake's number two hitter advanced to second after an infield hit, but after their cleanup hitter walked, their number five hitter struck out to end the threat.

Miramonte's starting pitcher, senior Andrew Kjar, was brilliant. His slider baffled and neutralized hitters all day. "I feel most comfortable with it (the slider), it's just like a fastball until the last second when you need to break your wrist to get the movement on it," said Kjar. After getting the cleanup hitter to pop out to end the third inning, it was pretty much smooth sailing from then on. Kjar wound up throwing a three-hit complete game shutout to seal the NCS championship by a score of 1-0.

"I'm really proud of the boys, because of what they've been through all week. Their heads and hearts were in other places, but they did it. They did it!" said Coach Dell 'Aquila.



Andrew Kjar (34) and Kevin Paulsen (4) pound it after a great inning

Photo Jordan Fong



Mike Reuvekamp (1) gets a laugh with teammates during the second inning



Kevin Paulsen rounds third base to score after a single by Mike Reuvekamp in the first inning

Photos Jordan Fong

Gymnastics – More than Flying Through the Air

Submitted by Candace Morton



Cameron Morton

(photo provided)

Melanie Jorgenson, 17, pauses, takes a deep breath, runs, leaps into the air, twisting her body, head over heels and lands amazingly unharmed with a big grin. She is just one of several Lamorinda gymnasts who call Concord's Golden Gate Gymnastics their home gym. Melanie discovered the sport when she was 2 1/2 at a friend's birthday party. "I like the challenges and learning new tricks," says Melanie, a Level 9 gymnast and junior at Acalanes High School.

Her younger counterparts concur, "I like flipping through the air, it feels like I'm flying," says Sawyer Morton, 13, a 7th grader at Stanley Middle School.

Her younger sister, Cameron, a 5th grader at Lafayette Elementary says, "I kind of feel like a superhero when I'm flipping around."

Besides being fun what can gymnastics do for your child? Mike Lynch, Owner/Coach of Golden Gate Gymnastics says, "It helps increase strength, flexibility, balance,

and coordination; however, the self-confidence and lessons learned such as perseverance and dedication transfer to every other area of their life."

He isn't the only ones singing gymnastics' praises. A study completed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) showed that graduation rates for gymnasts exceed 90 percent in college, much higher than the national average. Women gymnasts received more NCAA academic awards than any other sport at a rate of two to three times that of other sports. Gymnasts also received more NCAA post-graduate scholarships.

When looking for a gym, make sure to look for a USAG (United States Association of Gymnastics) certified gym with USAG certified instructors who have the knowledge to coach and spot your child appropriately.

Sabba Jweinat, 11, a 5th grader at Springhill Elementary says it best, "Once you start gymnastics you can't stop and life without it is boring and lazy."

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Team Camp is open to incoming 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade boys interested in improving their game. This is a great opportunity for players who strive to play at the High School level to work with the Campolindo staff and players. See you on the court!

WHEN: JUNE 22 - JUNE 27
TIMES: 4 - 6 MON-FRI, 9 - NOON SAT
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