

## Orinda all-girl robotics team makes it to NorCal championships



Team Stampede (from top left): Sophie Davis, Alexia Gkatzimas, Grace Kosla, Trisha Madannavar, Lina Parikh, and Lauren Stuffmann

Submitted by  
**Roxanne Christophe**

Team Stampede, an all-girl robotics

team from Orinda, made it through a highly competitive round of the FIRST LEGO League robotics qualifiers and headed to the Northern California RePlay Championships on March 14.

While they didn't advance at the championships, the team had a wonderful time participating. Made up of fifth-grade Wagner Ranch Elementary students Sophie Davis, Alexia Gkatzimas, Grace Kosla, Trisha Madannavar, Lina Parikh and Lauren Stuffmann, the team has been busy for the past year designing and preparing their robot and beat off stiff competition Feb. 13 to win the award for "Best Robot Design" at the FIRST LEGO League robotics tournament.

FIRST LEGO League Challenge introduces science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to children ages 9-16 through fun, exciting hands-on learning. Participants gain real-world problem-solving experience through a guided, global robotics program. The program is designed to inspire participants to experiment and grow their critical thinking, coding and design skills through hands-on STEM learning and robotics.

According to UNESCO, only around 30% of all female students select STEM-related subjects in higher education with robotics engineering being a male dominated field. These courageous young ladies are evidence that it may not stay that way for long.

"From where we started to where we are now, we have accomplished a lot. We have learned to always stay motivated and excited for what is to

come even when we are hitting a bumpy road. Whether it is succeeding in a mission or finding what we enjoy, we wouldn't be able to do it without each other. During the process, we learned that even though challenges occur, the best feeling is when you stick with it and overcome the challenge as a team," said members of Team Stampede.

Team Stampede Coach and mom to Trisha, Deepa Bangalore, said, "It's so inspiring to watch the girls work so well together and pull for each other. Since the qualifiers, the girls have been on overdrive, and they've set themselves some rather lofty goals to make their robot even better for the NorCal RePlay Championship."

According to Team Stampede moms, one of the main criteria the teams are judged on is the FIRST LEGO League Core Values of Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun and the team hit the mark with all of those values.

The girls say they are thankful to Elise Chang of Miramonte High School who was instrumental in helping launch Team Stampede last year.

If you would like more information about forming a robotics team email Christine Gkatzimas at cgkatzimas@yahoo.com. For more information on FIRST LEGO League visit [www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fl](http://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fl)

Photo provided

## National Letter of Intent signing day for Campolindo football seniors



Maxwell Weaver

Submitted by **Lauren Fritch**

Campolindo High School recognized seniors Matai Bell and Maxwell Weaver for their com-



Matai Bell

Photos provided

mitment to play Division 1 football at Army West Point (Bell) and Davidson (Weaver) during National Letter of Intent signing day on Feb. 3.

## The reinstatement of outdoor sports in Lamorinda

By **Jonathan Pham**

Under new guidelines released by the California Department of Public Health, outdoor recreational sports resumed as of Feb. 26. Even though the Contra Costa County's COVID-19 cases placed it within the purple tier of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, athletes throughout the county may now compete in outdoor sports.

"I'm super excited to get out there for a couple games this season with my squad. I think it's super important for all the athletes in California. It gives us something to look forward to and enjoy in such a rough period of time," Miramonte High School junior and varsity football wide receiver Sam Ross said.

Disregarding a county's

COVID-19 tier designation, the key metric in determining whether or not outdoor recreational sports may resume is the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people. The new guidelines allow outdoor high-contact sports in counties at or under 14 cases per 100,000. Contra Costa County currently sits within the threshold at 9.3 cases per 100,000.

Players over the age of 13 in sports such as football, basketball, rugby, and water polo will have to submit weekly COVID-19 tests. This is because participants in these sports are more likely to play with face-to-face contact without masks. On the contrary, sports with moderate contact such as baseball, softball, and cheerleading may continue without weekly testing.

"It's great that students

will have the choice to participate in high school sports again. Some families may choose not to, but I know that having the kids play sports, interact with each other and their coaches, and set goals again will be extremely beneficial for them. We will strictly follow guidelines from the state and county to ensure that our coaches and athletes stay safe," Miramonte High School Athletic Director and men's water polo head coach James Lathrop said.

Coaching staff, spectators, and athletes are required to wear face coverings when observing games. Spectators for high school sports must be members of a participant's immediate household.

*Jonathan Pham is a junior at Miramonte and writes for the school's newspaper, The Mirador.*

## Rain or Sunshine Run Club participates in virtual events



Photos provided

5K Finishers (Feb. 11) from left: Cameron, Cody, Taejin, Colbie, Dash, Brendan



10K Finishers (Feb. 2) from left: Coach Diane, Junior Coach Namratha, Cate, Lauren, Colbie, Cameron, Sadie, TJ, Brendan, Sam

Submitted by **Diane Batchelor**

For five weeks, meeting three afternoons a week for an hour the Rain or Sunshine Run Club athletes (seventh- and eighth-graders) trained for a Virtual 5K and/or 10K. Their training took them up to the Lafayette Reservoir to run a loop or two and various sections of the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. Along with running, the athletes work on strength training and discuss fueling the body for running. For many it was their first time running a 10K

(6.2 miles) and all worked on improving their 5K (3.1 miles) time. The timed course took them from the Lafayette Community Center to Moraga Commons and back on the trail. As the group name implies – Rain or Sunshine – it rained on their 5K but that didn't stop them from achieving their goal of finishing with fantastic times. The team, coached by Diane Batchelor and Junior Coach Namratha, has enjoyed a break from Zoom lessons all day and is now back training for five weeks and another virtual event.

## Excitement and relief as football season begins

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Hemming (30T, 3.5 TFL, 2.5 sacks) and Fouch (24T, 7TFL, 2.5 sacks) are also the leaders on the defensive line.

The linebacker corps is comprised of returning starters led by Sam Ross who led the team with 56 tackles and 10.5 tackles for loss, Ricevuto (23T, 1TFL, 1 Sack) and Jake Doran who had 17 tackles in only six games last year.

With Aiden Browne moving back to free safety combined with Hayden Simon, the defensive back group is another group with both talent

and experience.

"We do have a good core of returning players at every position," said Schram. "The key for us is to stay healthy."

The Matadors open their season with a non-league game at Berkeley this coming Friday.

For Campolindo, Macy's initial concern in returning to practice was the mental state of the team. "The player's minds are still with us after all the distance learning and sitting in zoom classes. It's like we skipped the season and went right into the playoffs so we're looking at a lot of loaded teams on our schedules."

Coming off a 10-3 season, the first need on the field for Campolindo was replacing last year's starting quarterback, Grant Harper. Senior Jacob Griessell is going to have to learn on the run, having only thrown nine passes last year. Macy is optimistic from what he has seen so far. "Jacob's arm strength has really improved, and he has also filled out physically," Macy said. "It's just going to be how he does in the pocket."

Equally challenging for Macy will be to replace last year's runners which accounted for 95% of the yards

gained rushing. Dilan Thoms will be one back and linebackers J.T. Clarke and Jake Leuteneker will also be used in the backfield. "They'll be fine," Macy said confidently.

Griessell will be helped by the return of veteran receivers. Seniors Maxwell Weaver (31 receptions), who will be playing for Davidson next year, Joey Schmidt (25 receptions) and Zach Raphael (8 receptions) will provide a lot of stability in the passing game.

The offensive line is an experienced group led by tackle Matai Bell who will be playing for West Point next

year and junior Elijah Klock. "Just about all of them got a lot of playing time," Macy said.

On defense, seniors Daniel Wheeler (8.5 sacks) and Cole Curtiss (2.5 sacks) are key returners along with J.T. Clarke, "whose motor is always roaring," said Macy.

This was to be a celebratory 25th season for Macy but he's adjusted as have the players to what has transpired.

The Cougars won their opening game 27-23 at Freedom High School, led by Griessell's four touchdown passes and Thoms' 132 yards passing.