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St. Mary's Championship Rugby Team

Photo Christine Hutchins

# Gaels Rugby victorious over Navy in National Championship

By Jon Kingdon

In what would prove to be a tale of two halves, St. Mary's upended the first seeded Midshipmen by a score of 26-22, with Head Coach Tim O'Brien's winning his fifth national championship in seven final matches, in a game on May 4 that was not decided until the final seconds.

With the wind at their back in the first half, St. Mary's jumped out to a 21-0 lead with tries by Schultz nominees Dominic Besag and Erich Storti (who was named Player of the Game) along with a try by John Battle Wilson before Navy, using their maul offense, was able to score late in the first half making the score at halftime 21-5.

Playing in the Houston heat and humidity led to some sloppy ball handling on both sides. At the end

of the first half, Coach O'Brien addressed the obvious: "We need to be more efficient with the ball in our hands" and at the end of the game, O'Brien told the Goff Rugby Report: "I would like to come back here and really play the way we can but, in the end, we did win against a really exceptional Navy team."

St. Mary's scored quickly at the start of the second half with a try by Sosaia Pongi off a great pass by Besag to make the score 26-5, but that would be the end of St. Mary's scoring. Navy would go on to score two tries and a drop goal to end the scoring.

After that, both teams had several opportunities to score, but turnovers and a strong defense by both sides kept the game scoreless the rest of the way.



Kaipono Kayoshi running through Navy Photo Rebecca Harper

With Navy close to the try zone past the 80-minute mark, a big hit jarred the ball into the hands of Besag and he kicked it dead to clinch the victory.

The Gaels line play was led by Battle Wilson and lock Lleyton Delzell. O'Brien's quote after the BYU game about all of his linemen was equally valid against Navy: "They guard those fringes with their lives. Even though they lack size, they dominate in the contact area."

For graduate students, Erich Storti and Kaipono Kayoshi, playing in their last game for St. Mary's, the championship game was a great capstone to their careers at St. Mary's.

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## Orinda's Lowest Gas Prices

**22 Bryant Way - Next to Casa Orinda**

**Mon - Sat 5 am - 12 am;  
Sun 6 am - 11 pm**

# Transitional kindergarten is open to all Lafayette families

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Teacher Katie Norris, Happy Valley Elementary School in Lafayette, gets her Transitional Kindergarten class started in the morning with carpet time.

There is huge growth in transitional kindergarten (TK) enrollment in Lafayette, according to Betsy Balmat, Lafayette School District Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. For the coming school year, 2024/25, Lafayette will have eight TK

classrooms across all four Lafayette elementary schools.

Balmat emphasized that TK is a resource for families to make sure that their children are provided with the pre-school learning foundation the district wants children to have. ... continued on Page 3

# Lamorinda — honk if you love trucks, trucks, and more trucks

By Vera Kochan

Seeing trucks up close and personal has recently become a national craze. Places like Las Vegas, Nevada; Jackson, Mississippi; Lafayette, Louisiana; North Haven, Connecticut; and the state of Hawaii have all boasted truck-touching events in recent months.

Closer to home, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Jose, and Oakland are some of the California cities that have jumped on the bandwagon. And, not to be outdone, Lamorinda has given its residents the opportunity to not only "Touch a Truck", as the event is more commonly known, but permission to sit inside some of the behemoths and honk their horns loud enough to blast the clouds out of the sky.

Orinda was the first in our tri-city area to host such an event on April 13. The Rotary Club of Lafayette held "Keep on Truckin'" April 27, with admission sales that benefited Shelter, Inc., a local nonprofit



Photo Vera Kochan

Lafayette residents enjoy a bevy of big trucks.

dedicated to helping homeless and hungry families.

"The event was a tremendous success with an estimated 1,000 attendees, mostly families with young children ages 3-8," stated Rotary Co-Chairman Buddy Brodwin. "Everyone was so nice, ex-

cited, and grateful for perfect weather and a truly fun event. I suspect Rotary will make this a yearly event. We think Shelter, Inc. will be more than pleased at our donation to them, as well! For our first time out, I'd say we hit a home run!"

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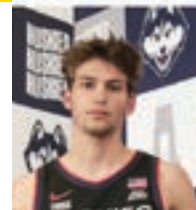


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