



SPORT

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORT NEWS

Let the Games Begin

By: Malia McClurg

Amid a sea of uniforms, smiling faces, and coffee-toting parents, one thing was clear: baseball season had begun. Orinda Baseball Association's annual opening day started off with a bang early Saturday morning and carried over into the sunny afternoon. It was an event to remember. Full of raffles, awards, pictures and of course, baseball, the big day lived up to expectations. Hundreds of kids filled Wagner Ranch Elementary to participate eagerly in all the schedule promised. The day began with team pictures. But, the kids didn't have to wait patiently for their turn because they had carnival games that included speed-pitching, home-run hitting and strength testing contests to keep them busy.

Although the focus was on having fun and enjoying the day, OBA players and families reached out to others. In the middle of the field there was a large box for an important cause. On this day, players were encouraged to bring in their own or outgrown equipment for needy children in an effort called Baseball for All. After the initial games, it was time for the ceremony. Parents, friends, players and coaches filled the gym as the

teams paraded in with their team flags.

This day wasn't just for the boys. In fact, there are a few girls who play on several of the OBA teams. In particular, Megan Reid was singled out and received a trophy. She plays competitively at the Mustang level and was recognized for her hard work, skill and positive attitude on the field. It was clear what the fans thought of her, because when she went up to accept her award she was met by deafening cheers.

Justin Sawrey-Kubicek was another standout. He was named the 2006 Will Newton Memorial Award winner. OBA president, Rob Weikert, described the achievement as the lifetime achievement award for baseball. Weikert described Justin as a versatile player who excelled at any position and always worked his hardest to better the team and not just his own stats. After being with OBA through all the divisions, Justin currently is playing on the Miramonte baseball team.

The ceremony began with the national anthem and concluded with everyone joining in to sing "Take me out to the ballgame." Lastly, just before the kids were released, there was an opening pitch and traditional announcement: play ball!

A Look Back at the Women's Soccer NCS Semi-Final

By Malia McClurg

This was an epic game, fuelled by two previous meetings of crosstown rivals. Both previous season games went to the Matadors, 0-1 and 0-4.

It was immediately obvious why the Matadors had kept Campolindo from scoring in the two previous meetings. Their defense was almost impenetrable.

Despite being forced to defend a good amount of the first half, the Cougars mounted a quick counter attack 26 minutes into the game. The Matadors sprang back as McKenna DeBack tore down the sideline and served a great ball on the ground across the box. It arrived perfectly at Katherine Sander's feet. She collected, turned, and hit a wicked shot on target, but it was saved by the Campolindo keeper, Laura "L.B." Banister.

A few minutes later, a controversial call (or lack there of) changed the game. The Matadors managed to push a ball through the Campolindo defense and avoid the offside call. When Marisa Rowland got the ball, she kept her composure, turned, and put the ball just past L.B.

putting the Matadors up, 1-nil.

After this, play remained in favor of Miramonte, who dominated the possession, won 50/50 balls, and took the space they were

in suspense.

Five players from each team were chosen to step up and take a penalty kick, one at a time. Miramonte started with a bang as Maria Pitt sunk the ball into the back of

the net. Campo's first shot was saved. 1-0. Miramonte's second chance was also good, followed by the Cougar's first successful PK. L.B. saved Miramonte's third attempt, leaving the score 2-1.

Next, the Mats' Jennifer Whitehouse stepped up to the ball. Her shot was saved and looked like the end for the



given. Based on the first half, a spectator may have been tempted to write off the trailing Cougars.

Half time came and the Cougars returned with a different mentality. Campolindo coach, Ernesto Silva, told his players to forget their first two meetings and get confident. It worked. Instead of being caught on their heels, Campo stepped up to the ball, closed in on space, and worked to keep pressure on the Matadors.

In the second half, McKenna Deback continued to challenged the Cougar keeper, but to no avail. L.B. relentlessly made key saves to keep her team in the game.

Campo finally got satisfaction twenty-four hard-fought minutes into the second half when Campolindo sophomore Erin Bricker headed a ball that popped up just enough to float over the keeper. Tie game.

Overtime

The Cougars maintained momentum from the second half, but the Mat's didn't lie down. Passions were high, as the only card came—a yellow—at the end of the second overtime period when Corinne Collins brought down Erin Bricker from behind. But the Cougars couldn't make anything of their good field position and sent the game into penalty kicks.

Penalty kicks are an unfortunate way to end a great match up, but what they lack in closure, they make up for

the net. Campo's first shot was saved. 1-0. Miramonte's second chance was also good, followed by the Cougar's first successful PK. L.B. saved Miramonte's third attempt, leaving the score 2-1.

Next, the Mats' Jennifer Whitehouse stepped up to the ball. Her shot was saved and looked like the end for the



Cougars. But, the shot was called back. The keeper may move horizontally, but cannot step forward before the ball is shot. So, Jennifer got to retake the kick, and made it. Tied at 2-2.

Miramonte's Katherine Cuyler kicked next. It was good. And their keeper, Shelby Church, saves Campolindo's next attempt. This means it is 3-2 in favor of Miramonte after four girls have shot. If the next Miramonte player scores, the game is over. The ball hits the post and puts Campolindo in a "must score" situation to tie.

Samantha Faber steps up, but her shot was saved. The Mats win and start to run out to the field.

But wait. After a painstaking moment, the ref-

Doesn't matter. "L.B." saved it again. The Cougars only need to score the next shot to win, but it was saved. As the number of players who haven't shot dwindled, the Matador's keeper, Church, stepped up and sunk one of her own.

Next, Campolindo freshman, Ashley Aczon, was in a must score situation. She does.

Here comes round eight and here comes L.B. with another save.

Finally, Sophomore Mint Bhetraratana, stepped up and ended the game with a goal. The Cougars won and fans stormed the field. Both teams came ready to play, but the Cougars came away with it.

Campolindo's winning streak continued on Saturday, February 24, 2007 when they beat Bishop O'Dowd 2-1 in the NCS Finals to become the NCS AA Champions.

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