

# SPORTS

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### Sorensons Take Gold at Junior Olympics

By Jennifer Wake

Two Stanley Middle School students, Tyler and Nicolette Sorenson took gold medals at the July 24 USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif.

Tyler, who won the midjet (11-12) boys' title last year, took top honors in the youth boys' 3000-meter walk at 15:01.51. His younger sister, Nicolette, captured gold in the midjet (11-12) girls' 1500 walk with a time of 7:43.20.

Nicolette was the first to start race walking three years ago at age 8, after a friend at Diablo Track and Field Club (DVTFC) introduced her to the sport. After Nicolette won the Junior Olympics for race walking in 2005, Tyler got interested.

A fairly unknown sport, race walking revolves around keeping the right form. One foot must be on the ground at all times, and when a foot lands, the leg must be straight.

"To help do this, you land on your heel and roll to your toe and push off. And since your leg must be straight when you land, you rotate your hips out of the way," said Nicolette. "So on the whole race walking looks kind of funny. There are always judges at race walking events that can disqualify you if your form isn't correct."

In addition to race walking, Nicolette runs track events for DVTFC, setting the mile and 800-meter records for 6th grade girls at Stanley this year.



Tyler and Nicolette Sorenson Photo provided

Tyler also runs track for DVTFC. His longest race was a 19 kilometer trail race and he runs the 10k Lafayette Reservoir Run every year. He is also part of Stanley's track and field team, holding the 6th grade boy's mile record.

The USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships is the largest and most visible youth athlete developmental program in the world. Entry for this championship is based on athlete performances at preliminary, Association, and Regional levels of the 2007 USATF Junior Olympic Program.

In the future, Nicolette says she would like to "keep winning JO's and eventually make the Junior National Race Walking Team, which is a team of track athletes age 14 to 18 that represent the United States at world competitions."

Tyler wants to break the USATF youth boys' national record next year and qualify for the Junior National Team when he's older.

### Menace Morphs into One of the Area's Top Teams

Submitted by Pat Mason

In only its third year, the 2007 Lamorinda Menace 12U traveling tournament softball team became one of the East Bay's dominant teams.

The Menace enjoyed a fantastic summer, playing teams from all over Northern California in four Bay Area tournaments and one in Tahoe. Unlike softball teams that play year-round made up of players with no geographical boundaries, summer teams like the Lamorinda Menace consist of local "rec league" players primarily from Joaquin Moraga and Stanley middle schools, with all the girls proudly hailing from LMYA's spring softball league.

In 2007, the Menace not only dominated opponents within their division of teams drawn from small leagues such as LMYA, but they competed well in the "open division," where they often beat teams selected from literally hundreds of girls. In their 14 games against division teams, the Menace outscored those opponents 120-61, on the way to one outright tourney championship and another consolation title. In two "open division" tourneys, the Menace advanced far

into the semi-finals both times.

Opposing batters were kept off-balance by the Menace's pitching "dynamic duo" of fireballer Natalie Goepel and crafty Rebecca Crisp. For all three years, Goepel has been the Menace workhorse; this year Crisp contributed with some huge innings in critical games.

On offense, the Menace amassed 177 runs in 25 total games, led by the region's best power-hitting combo of Siena Del Ponte and Kat Mathis. Del Ponte hit for a .548 average, including 16 extra base hits; Mathis was an even tougher out, batting at a .606 clip, while belting 4 home runs. Grace Lovell (.481 average) and Emily Streeter (.429) provided similar supporting power. Other Menace provided great balance in the lineup — creative bats who specialized in finding ways to get on base ahead of those power hitters, and also move runners along: Audrey Vogel (.425 ave), speedy Brenna Williams (.381 ave), Sam Flower (.464 oba), Crisp (.439 oba), Tela Zemsch (.395 oba), Jackie Welland (.372 oba) and Goepel (12 runs scored).



Menace pitcher Becca Crisp begins her windup, while teammates Tela Zemsch (2d base) and Brenna Williams (right field) get ready on defense. Photo provided

Defensively, the Menace made huge strides this year, one of the main reasons for their meteoric rise. Mathis was phenomenal behind the plate, not only as a top-notch receiver, but as the summer progressed erstwhile base-stealers simply stopped challenging her arm. Lovell (1b), Crisp (2b), Del Ponte (ss), and Flower (3b) did their part to limit opponents to the Menace mantra of "just three outs, and only one base at a time."

Williams, Vogel, Streeter, Welland and Zemsch helped out in the infield, and also saved several games with great play in the outfield. The Menace also got important help from Sarah Reynolds,

Rachel Kelley, Sarah Chesbrough and Kalena Alva, each contributing to the Menace's winning season.

Spurred on by their rapid improvement, the Menace players were successful in lobbying their coaches and parents to continue playing — as a result, the Menace will play three more "fall ball" tourneys through October. The Menace extend their deep gratitude to the Saint Mary's College coaches and players who have been so instrumental in the success of the Menace: Jessica Haneseth, Staci Hamaguchi, Lauren Mello, Sadie Dolcini and Lauren Gardner.

### Two Oakland Strokes Rowers Compete in Beijing, China

Submitted by Renne Cherry



Two local Oakland Strokes rowers, Alaizah Koorji and T.J. Laher, both Miramonte High School graduates, made the cut to represent the United

States at the 2007 FISA World Rowing Junior Championships Aug. 8-11 in Beijing, China. Koorji beat out six other coxswains to earn her place on

the women's eight boat, and Laher rowed in the fifth seat for the men's eight.

According to Laher, who also tried out for the team in 2006, "It was a long and grueling summer of double workouts and living away from home, for the honor to compete in three days of racing in China."

The selection process began on June 11 and ended June 23. For the men's team, 24 rowers and five coxswains from throughout the country competed for the 12 available spots. The women's competition invited a total of 53 athletes, seven of which were coxswains. Rowers also had the opportunity to work out for three weeks at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, NY.

The junior national men inaugurated Beijing's newly constructed Olympic course and Laher's entire family made the trek to see his races. The men

competed in all three races, while the women's team raced twice in Beijing. They got a first place in their opening heat on Thursday, which gave them a pass to the finals, with results as follows:

**Women's 8**

Gold/ Romania	6:27:47
Silver/ Germany	6:29:07
Bronze/ USA	6:30:17

**Men's 8**

Gold/Germany	5:41:86
Silver/Netherl	5:44:34
Bronze/ China	5:48:24
4th/Italy	5:50:20
5th/USA	5:51:56
6th/Romania	5:58:70

Laher was thrilled to be representing his country in an international event. With only eight days left of his summer vacation after Beijing, he returned to Orinda before beginning his freshman year at Cal and rowing for the Bears.

### New Records Won at Championship Conference

Submitted by Kerry Hughes

Over 1,000 people attended the 2007 45th Annual Championship Conference Meet at Acalanes the weekend of Aug. 12-13, with teams including Dewing Park, Indian Valley, Larkey Sharks, Rudgear Estates, Rudgear Meadows, Springbrook, Sun Valley and Walnut Heights. Many records were broken this past weekend including 9-10

boys IM record of 21 years broken by Nicolas Insera with a time of 1:12:55; and Springbrook

9-10 boys free relay 17-year-old record broken by a time of 1:57:55 (previous time from 1989 was 2:02.10). Pictured are the 9-10 boys record holders from Springbrook Pool in Lafayette.



Winners are (in order) Dylan Foster, Murphy McQuet, Nicolas Insera and Brady Aiello, all of Lafayette.

### Lafayette Diver Wins NORCAL Scholarship at Invitational

Submitted by Steve Sherman

Lafayette resident and one of the Sherman Divers from Sherman Swim School, Laura Winn, won one of four \$1,000 scholarships from NORCAL Diving at the 47th Annual Sherman Invitational. The scholarships were created for those planning to continue to dive in college. Winn, who plans on attending UCLA in the fall, took first place in the 16-18 girls (JO) category with a score of 334.70 and first in the 19 & Over Women with a score of 238.95.

Other top divers at the Invitational included Rachel Purcell (Orinda), who placed second in the 11 & under girls (Novice) category with a score of 81.50, Mikeala Moore

(Moraga) who placed fourth with 79.00, and Sophie Brown (Moraga), in fifth with 76.50. Donna Brackett (Lafayette) placed third in the 13 and under girls (Novice) with 120.05, and Eliza Galligan (Moraga) placed fourth in the 14 & 15 under girls category with 217.25, and Heather Finertie (Orinda) took fourth with 150.75 in the girls 14-18 (Novice) category.

Six teams participated in the event, including Sherman Divers (Lafayette), Capital Divers (Sacramento), All Valley Divers (San Ramon), Santa Clara Divers (Santa Clara), DeVinci Divers (Nevada City), and Santa Rosa Diving Team (Santa Rosa).

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