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Saint Mary's Connecting with Youth

By Mikaela Cowle



Coach Rob Browning with members of the volleyball team Photo Tod Fierner

Summer is here and camps are starting. The Saint Mary's Women's Volleyball team is very excited to be hosting a number of camps again. Head coach, and Moraga local, Rob Browning has finished his fourth year at Saint Mary's and doesn't hesitate to comment on how the community "is a big part of the program." In his first year as head coach, he not only led the Gaels to their first NCAA Tournament, but also began his work in the community.

Saint Mary's hosts several clinics for the area throughout the year and most of the players help coach local Nor Cal teams. Browning has also made an effort to find gym space for many of the Lafayette Moraga Youth Association teams. As Browning acknowledges, "The Lamorinda area is a tight knit community and Saint Mary's is an integral part of it." Living in Moraga with his wife Michelle and his two young children Madison and John, Browning sees on a personal level the difference role models make for our youth.

The VolleyGaels, a fan club specifically for the Saint Mary's women's volleyball team, brings a screaming crowd of children to all of the games. "The community is a huge part of the success of the team," Browning says, "the team wants and feels the support of the community." After many of the games Browning makes the girls accessible to the kids, so they can meet their heros one on one.

At summer camps the Gael's get to spend more individual time with their young fans and impart important direction about fundamentals the game. At a Saint Mary's volleyball camp, Browning says, "You are going to have fun. On top of that we want to make sure that you receive instruction and walk away feeling like this is one of the best volleyball camps you've ever been to." With instruction from top-notch players such as Megan York, one of the best outside hitters in the West Coast Conference and Megan Burton and Shannon Lowell, who made the West Coast Conference All Academic Team, the Gaels provide a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff at all of their camps.

Enrollment is still open. If you don't make it to meet this wonderful group of people during the summer, stop by McKeon Pavilion in the fall to watch them in action.

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