

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Cassidy Haskell – running from Miramonte to California



Cassidy Haskell in 2016

Photo Gint Federas

By Jon Kingdon

With a high school career that could be described as ranging from the ecstasy to the agony and back again, Cassidy Haskell took a trip to Norway where she was able to visit “lots of family.” It was here that Haskell was able to get some space and look back on her

track career and time at Miramonte High School and to look forward to her upcoming freshman year at the University of California.

Haskell was drawn to running whether it was cross country, which she began in the second grade, or soccer, which also entailed a lot of running. “My love for running

just grew and grew,” said Haskell. “Around seventh grade I quit soccer and focused exclusively on running.”

As a freshman, Haskell ran 4:52.29 in the 1600 meters and 10:51.37 in the 3200 meters, time that rated her the No. 2 freshman in the country and garnered her a lot of publicity which for one so young is not always easy: “It was not tough then because I did well that season but it got tougher when I got that exposure and then I was getting injured and I wasn’t where I wanted to be. It may have been a little scary because I was new to high school running and I was running against people that were four years older than me.”

The challenges seemed to come one after the other through her high school career starting with a stress fracture in her foot and an assortment of illnesses that constantly set her back, forcing her to miss most of her sophomore year and her junior year of cross country.

Tristan Tool, the head track coach at Miramonte, was a first-hand witness to what Haskell went through: “It’s been a tougher road for Cassidy than most. Last year, we very slowly weaned her back on to running and enjoying it and being passionate about it and not feeling any pressure. It’s been a long road back for her. She really fought back against everything to get where she is today and she has a really bright future because she has barely tapped into what she did as a freshman.”

Haskell developed a new appreciation for what she got out of running when she was forced to sit out so much time: “It was pretty hard because I relied on running for more than just the sport. It helps my everyday life as well in many ways so not having that was tough. Overall, it gave me the

motivation to come back even stronger because I wanted it that bad.”

For Haskell and the other long-distance runners, it has to be more than just running for times. There is a camaraderie with her teammates and other runners: “We’re all a little bit insane to be able to constantly push ourselves beyond what we think we can. When you tell a non-runner that you run about 50 miles a week, they will look at you like your crazy. I think that we all have that crazy mentality to push each other to be better.”

It was Haskell’s endurance that stood out most to Tool: “Cassidy has a great ability to maintain her pace and to push herself and maintain high speeds for long periods of time. That’s something that you can’t teach or coach. As people would fatigue and fall out, Cassidy would grind and maintain.”

When Haskell returned to running competitively again, her perspective was to take it, appropriately enough, a step at a time: “When I started running the 1600 meters in my junior season, I was 50 seconds slower than what I ran when I finished that season. I did not have any goals and wasn’t aiming for any times, but I was just putting it out on the track each time and seeing what it led to.”

Tool was a very important factor in Haskell’s comeback: “He was very, very supportive. He always wanted the best for me and so he would work with me individually if I had an injury or I wasn’t feeling my best, he would know exactly what to do and offer support the way I needed it. He would create workouts that would be beneficial to me and would put the time into my training and see where I needed to improve.”

Tool appreciated how Haskell took on the leadership role for the underclassmen:

“We have a great group of freshman and sophomores and she sort of mother-ducked them. She would drive them around and sit with them in the weight room. They all loved her a lot.”

It was the mental aspect of running that Haskell saw as the most important part in the maturing process: “It’s the biggest thing in running. You develop a lot of mental strength. Being able to push past the barriers that you didn’t think you could take time and a lot of practice. We had a lot of new runners that lacked experience so there was a lot of teaching and showing them how to do things in the best way. I created a lot of bonds with the younger runners which I really enjoyed.”

Miramonte made a large impression overall on Haskell: “I made a lot of friends through running and school. I also made a lot of connections with my teachers with whom I could talk to and get advice from that prepared me for a lot of many of life’s situations. In particular, I took journalism and wrote for the school paper and my teacher was Mrs. (Donya) Goussios. I had her for five different classes. She became a mentor to me and someone I could talk to and someone I know I can continue talking to through college and beyond. She is very important to me and I know for a number of other students as well.”

Choosing to go to Cal was an easy decision for Haskell: “I will be running cross country and track. I wanted to run in the PAC 12 and I know a ton of people on their team so I will have connections going in. Geographically, it’s close but on another level, it doesn’t feel very close. I’ll be gaining a lot of independence and look forward to joining the college and track community along with getting a great education there.”

Swim team snack shack profits sink under county regulations



Photo John T. Miller

Jon Llama, center, of Agave Restaurant in Concord, oversees catering the home meets for Campolindo Cabana Club.

By John T. Miller

A routine water quality check by the county health department at the Sun Valley pool in Lafayette a couple of years ago turned disastrous for the team’s snack bar, essentially forcing its closure.

The health department official discovered that not only were the facilities inadequate, but they didn’t have an operation permit for it. Adding to these troubles was the discovery that they had never filed a use permit.

The use permit had never been filed because the pool was in operation before the city was incorporated. It was brought under question when a neighbor complained about noise at the pool. The permits, along with an Environmental Impact Report, lawyers’ fees and other expenditures, ended up costing over \$100,000.

The person in charge of the snack shack, Beth Kring, says, “We used to net about \$1,200 at each home meet and

provide food for the coaches. Now, we have a food truck come in, and all we get are eight free meals for the coaches and long lines at the truck.”

The team had to set up a fundraising arm to try to make up for the lost money. They’ve held lapathons, raffles – with donated prizes from community members – and numerous other fundraisers, in addition to selling magnets and team apparel at the pool.

A spokesperson for another pool in the Lamorinda area, who asked to remain anonymous, said, “The snack shack has become a four-letter word! We had to spend over \$20,000 in facility improvements. The county makes it nearly impossible to run a snack shack.”

Some clubs have let outside restaurants take over the snack shack, essentially having their home meets catered. One such case is Campolindo Cabana Club in Moraga, which, after having a food

truck sell at the curb – with the attendant long lines – has its home meets catered by Jon Llama of Agave Restaurant in Concord.

“We have the license and insurance and everything else covered, so the pool just provides the volunteers in the snack shack,” says Llama. “The restaurant kicks back 4% to the club as a community service.”

The Cabana Club had to remodel and upgrade the kitchen, and the monetary kickback is a far cry from what the snack bar used to make.

One swim team that’s been able to continue business as usual at its meets is the Moraga Country Club, since it has a full commercial kitchen to accommodate the 81 points of the county health code that must be followed.

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