

Frankly

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but I guess his brand of humor isn’t directed at 50-year-old geezers like myself, who are armed with a dash of intelligence.

I did find the Ferrell vehicle *Elf* mildly amusing. For about 15 minutes. And by the by, hasn’t this movie already been made? Or was it a TV series? Get confused sometimes. Anyway, the reviewers haven’t been too kind to the current flick. But I am sure Mr. Ferrell cashed his paycheck anyway.

Here is a novel idea for Ferrell’s next project. Seems that there is an opening in the USC athletic department. The football school on Figueroa is looking for a men’s hoop coach after Tim Floyd abruptly resigned last week. Seems Floyd was given the option of quitting or being fired by Athletic Director Mike Garrett. Something about Floyd handing a bag of pennies to one of the peeps representing teen hoop star O.J. “One and Done” Mayo. Can’t believe that with all the alleged shady dealing dotting the smarmy landscape of college athletics, that Floyd, who had done a good job at SC, was canned because he was somehow involved in handing over a bag of cash earmarked for a recruit.

I think that Garrett should put in a call to one Bobby Knight, the ex-Indiana and Texas Tech coach who may be getting tired of spinning his wheels working for ESPN.

Bring the General out West to the Galen Center, and let him garner a little pub for the program, which appears to be circling the drain after mass player defections to the NBA and the renegeing on commitments by sought-after high school recruits.

But if Knight isn’t considered, how bout giving the job to SC alumnus Ferrell? If the team is going to tank, can’t think of a better guy to lead the charge into the “Land of the Lost.”

And on the prediction front: Selected the Penguins to win the Stanley Cup, which they did last weekend, edging the runner-up Detroit Red Wings 2-1 in a riveting game seven. Said Lakers in six, which was pretty darn close. The kid picked the Lakes in five. Bingo! And, most importantly, guaranteed that the Little League Mighty Mariners would win the incredibly prestigious “King of the Beach” tourney, which actually wasn’t named the KOTB tourney this year. We lost in the final Sunday 7-6 to the fine team from Manhattan Beach, the Waves. Congrats, MB coaches and kids!

Two for three in the old prediction game. Watch out for Retief Goosen, folks! And Happy Father’s Day to all. From where I sit, nothing beats being a dad...

Mustangs Baseball: A Season of Success and Sadness

By Gregg McMullin



Mustang players like Ian Neal wore patches on their uniforms in memory of Henry Pearson.

The Mira Costa High School baseball season was a bittersweet year that was filled with success and sadness. After missing out of going to the CIF Division II playoffs in 2008, the Mustangs went 20-12 and went into the playoffs as the third place team. The team did mourn the loss of a former Mustang and prayed for the recovery of another one. But through it, all they focused on their season while thinking of their alumni friends.

Mustang coach Mike Neily, who celebrated his 300th career win against South Torrance on March 24, had reason to like the chances of his 2009 team. With plenty of experience returning and the addition of newcomers to the team, the Mustangs were poised to return to the playoffs. Most observers thought the team’s strengths would be the pitching with senior Brent Weber leading the way and juniors James Glawe, Robert Parucha, Michael Beals and Drew Vanorden rounding out a deep pitching staff. The staff was good enough to strike out an average of one batter per inning and had a respectable 2.87 ERA.

But as good as the pitching was, the hitting was as good as anyone in the South Bay too. With juniors Kyle Demarco ( .429) and Jake Jelmini (.400) as well as seniors Austin Chavira (.381), Zach Carney (.368), Dean Shigemura (.355) and Lucas Whitehill (.330, 36 RBIs and five home runs), the Mustangs had six tough outs in the lineup.

The season started pretty much like it did last year when the Mustangs won the El Segundo Tournament. Three straight wins against Oak Park, Hawthorne and North Torrance (all playoff teams) put the Mustangs in contention for another tournament championship. But the Mustangs lost consecutive games to two more playoff teams, South Torrance and Gahr, to drop out of the championship picture. The fact is the Mustangs’ schedule was full of playoff teams, as they played 28 games against post-season teams and finished a respectable 16-12 overall against them.

The Mustangs played a non-league double-header against South Bay power El Segundo and lost a heartbreaker 6-5 in the opener while dropping the nightcap 11-4. With an impressive showing against Santa Monica and Long Beach Poly, the Mustangs were ready to take on teams in the Orange County Nissan Tournament. But the Mustangs faced Hemet, Northwood (Irvine), Ocean View (Huntington Beach) and King (Riverside) and won only one game in the tournament. The pitching staff was rattled for 29 runs in four games while the defense also contributed to the downfall in a couple of those games.

When the Bay League started, Mira Costa was thought to be a legitimate contender along with Palos Verdes and West Torrance. The Mustangs won their first five games of the

league schedule, including two-game sweeps of Leuzinger and West Torrance, before splitting with Peninsula. With just two series left against Redondo and Palos Verdes, the Mustangs needed to sweep Redondo to keep pace with Palos Verdes with a winner-take-all two-game, season-ending series.

Trailing Redondo 3-1 in the fourth inning, the Mustangs tied the game and then went on to score four more runs in the sixth highlighted by Demarco’s two-run single. Vanorden came on in relief of Glawe and nailed down the win for the Mustangs. In the second game, the Mustangs scored five first inning runs. Brent Weber was masterful through five innings before giving way to Colin Grant to get some experience as the Mustangs completed their sweep with a 10-0 victory. Chris Cayton’s 2-for-3 that included a home run, double, and four RBIs led the Mustang’s attack.

The wins set up the biggest two-game series for Mira Costa in a couple of years. It would be against one of Southern California’s premier teams in Palos Verdes. Both teams came into the game with one league loss to Peninsula. A sweep by either team meant a Bay League championship while a spilt meant co-champions and possibly a favorable draw in the playoffs.

The Mustangs were trailing 3-2 in the sixth inning before they took a 4-3 lead on a long scoring fly ball by Carney. But that lead was short-lived, as PV scored twice in the seventh inning to go back up 5-4. Still, the Mustangs had an opportunity to tie and win the game when Jelmini and Jackson Morrow hit consecutive singles, but they were left stranded. In the second game, the Mustangs and Sea Kings locked up in a pitchers’ duel between Mira Costa’s Weber and PV’s A.J. Hellow. Both pitchers limited the other teams’ hitters to just five hits and Weber gave up just one earned run in the 2-1 loss. “Two very good teams battled this week and unfortunately we came away with two losses by a single run each time, but that’s baseball,” Neily said.

Heading into the postseason, the Mustangs were dealt a blow by having to play in a wild card game to just get into the playoffs. Though they were rewarded a home game against Valencia (Placentia), it was certainly no given that the Mustangs would triumph against a veteran Tiger team. But Weber saw to it that the Mustangs would advance with a masterful two-hitter while Mira Costa’s bats came alive late in the game for a 6-1 win.

Mira Costa’s year was a success already and it wasn’t about to let the season end. So facing Upland, 20-3 going into the game and one of the state’s top-ranked teams, in the

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