

Scouts

from front page

For Hadley, the troop’s outdoor activities, which range from surfing trips to climbing to the peak of Mt. Whitney, helped get him excited about Troop 849’s scouting program when he first joined. “As a younger scout working my way up in the troop, the outdoors were always a favorite part for me,” he said. “Backpacking and camping definitely made up my greatest memories in the troop.”

Eagle Projects

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the scouts was completing their Eagle Projects, community service projects that an Eagle candidate must conceive, plan and execute. All three did similar projects in the Angeles National Forrest’s Chilao Campground. They reported a combined total of nearly 1,500 volunteer hours, most of which were donated by fellow scouts.

For Vandenberg and other scouts, it was challenging to balance the long hours needed to work on the project, with their schoolwork and social lives. “You have to put a lot of work and effort in it,” Vandenberg said. “It happened when I was starting my junior year in high school, which is your most important year.” Vandenberg added that the project helped him become more patient. “I learned that I can be very focused at times, especially when I put my mind to something.” Gunderman said his Eagle Project has helped make him more confident about taking on large projects. “After you do something at least once you feel familiar with it,” he explained “Now I feel more comfortable being able to take a task and breaking it down into small pieces that are easy to accomplish.” Ryan Hadley saw the project as a chance for him to work on his leadership skills. “I learned to be persistent in what I need to do, and stay strong in leading a group,” he said. “It was a different experience for me as a leader, telling adults what to do. I had to really delegate the tasks and keep everything really organized.”

Help From Others

For all of the hard work it took to get where they are, the Eagle Scouts said they were helped by their scoutmaster, assistant scoutmasters, fellow scouts and parents. All three said their parents helped keep them on track and motivated, and appeared particularly thankful to their moms for providing lunch during the Eagle Projects.

Vandenberg said it helped to enter the program with friends, although he also met new friends because of scouting. Additionally, everyone motivated each other to continue their rank advancement. “I had some good friends who became Eagle Scouts as well,” he said. “They pushed me and I pushed them.”

The scouts also relied on the adult leaders for guidance, whose participation Vandenberg felt was just as important as scout participation. “The adults become the motivators for kids,” he said. “It’s more important to have the adults talk from experience than the scout book; it’s way more helpful and interesting.” Gunderman said he vividly remembers sitting down with Scoutmaster Dave Rolandelli to discuss what it would take to become an Eagle Scout. He recalled that in the course of the meeting, Rolandelli explained how many scouts end up dropping out after beginning the process. But Rolandelli assured the youngster that he was up to the task. “He said, ‘I believe in you, I believe you can do it,’ and having somebody say that can make a huge difference,” Gunderman said.

Life Lessons

This fall, Gunderman will attend Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, and Hadley and



Andrew Vandenberg



Ryan Hadley

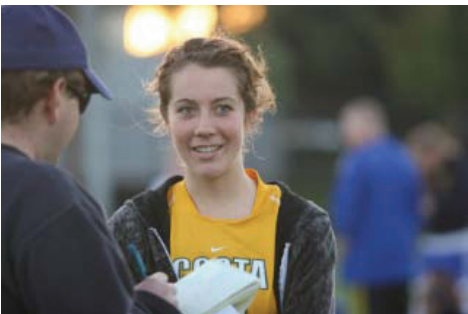


John Gunderman

Vandenberg are going to go to University of California, Santa Barbara. The scouts said they feel prepared for success beyond scouting. “I think it’s really going to help me when I go [to college],” Gunderman said. “Obviously orienteering isn’t much use in college, but things like being prepared and doing a good turn daily--that kind of stuff--is applicable to pretty much any lifestyle you choose.” Vandenberg was pleased the program has provided him with a network of friends and lasting leadership skills. “The most successful people in this world are leaders, so it helped me want to become a leader,” he said. “And like I said earlier, through patience and commitment, over the long haul you’ll get what you need to get done. Hadley said getting his Eagle showed the importance of not giving up and that getting his award reminded him of the day he climbed Mt. Whitney with other members

Mustangs

from front page



Julie Barrow led the Mustangs to their fifth consecutive Bay League girls’ soccer title

By Gregg McMullin

The Mira Costa Mustangs’ athletes had another great year and continued to demand respect in all sports. Both the boys’ and girls’ teams competed well and won a number of Bay League titles along the way. Though a couple of the teams were mentioned nationally, it was the first time in a couple of years that a national championship banner or CIF title banner will not be hoisted in Fisher Gym.

There were surprises, joyful moments and heartbreaks along the way, but through it all the Mustangs continued to show their classy way of handling each win or loss. There were happy times and celebrations, and sadly there were painful times filled with tears as well. The Mustangs took their losses seriously and their triumphs with pride, but the tears they shed were for a former Mustang they remembered.

The Mustangs didn’t dominate every sport, but they were certainly competitive and demonstrated why the Mustang coaching staffs are as good and loyal as any in the South Bay. The 2008/09 year is but a memory now and years from now, the athletes who played on these teams will tell stories of how their season went. So let’s take a look at this past year.

Football

Though the Mustangs failed to make the playoffs the year before, they returned a number of impact players and promoted some key personnel to reload an already promising team. The year started out on a down note, even though USC coach Pete Carroll and NFL great John Elway were in attendance when the Mustangs fell to Loyola 23-7. Losing to City finalist Narbonne and CIF power Newport Harbor to close out the non-league schedule may have been the turning point of the season for the Mustangs and made them ready for the Bay League title run. And what a run it was the rest of the way as the Mustangs went undefeated in the Bay League and got to the CIF title game.

The Mustangs opened the Bay League with a 21-8 throttling of West Torrance. It was a pivotal game for the Mustangs since West was considered a powerhouse and Mira Costa dominated the game. In the game against Palos Verdes, the Mustangs needed a fourth quarter comeback to win 20-16 when Kyle Nunn hauled in a 32-yard TD pass from Kyle Demarco. Sandwiched in between easy wins over Peninsula and Redondo was a 27-21 thrilling overtime win over Leuzinger on junior running back Kellen Lockwood’s five-yard TD run. The Mustangs were opening some eyes with their power running game and stout defense.

In the first round of CIF, the Mustangs had their troubles with Eastside (Lancaster), but came away with a hard-fought defensive 13-12 win. The game was still in doubt until Lockwood’s interception with under a minute to play. In the second round, the Mustangs faced Warren (Downey) without 1,000 yard rusher Chris Loatman, out with an injury. In stepped Lockwood and Morgan Reece, who pounded his way for 118 rushing yards as Mira Costa advanced with a convincing 28-14 win.

In the CIF semifinals, the Mustangs knocked off the top-seeded Palmdale Falcons 20-14 using a formidable defense led by All-CIF defensive end Matt Williams. With the win, the Mustangs moved onto the CIF finals for the first time since 1997 against third-seeded

Quartz Hills (Palmdale). The game was played in the high desert on a cold and windy night that did not benefit either team, but the Rebels scored third and fourth quarter TDs and came away with a 14-0 CIF championship win.

Cross Country

What else can you say about the Mustang’s boys’ and girls’ cross country teams; they both excelled to have another great year. The girls were the second-ranked team in the CIF Southern Section Division II and were led by sophomore sensation Savannah Pio. Pio helped lead her team to a fifth place overall finish in CIF and a consecutive appearance at the state finals.

Soccer

The boys’ team returned to the postseason after missing out in 2008. Jake Wilson helped lead his team to a 14-6-2 record and a Bay League title. Unfortunately, the Mustangs bowed out in the first round of the playoffs to Newport Harbor. The girls’ team, led by All-South Bay players Julie Barrow, Lauren Stillians and goalkeeper Katelyn O’Brien, won their fifth consecutive Bay League title. The Mustangs’ (14-3-2) solid defense allowed just 13 goals all year long, but their CIF title hopes were -dashed by a hard-fought 1-0 loss to Marina in the first round.

Water Polo

Laura Milstead led the Mustangs to a second place finish in the Bay League and for her efforts was named the Bay League’s Most Outstanding player. During the year she scored 40 goals and dished off 20 assists, but the Mustangs were bounced out of the playoffs in the first round.

The boys’ team has won three CIF titles during this decade, and with another team loaded with talent they once again went deep into the playoffs. The Bay League’s second place team was led by Player of the Year JL Kiss as the Mustangs lost in the semifinals in a heartbreaking 5-4 loss to Malibu.

Basketball

The boys’ team started the year on fire, going 9-4 with a roster of just five seniors. Coach Henry Myar had reason to be excited about his youthful team with the way they battled all year long. Football standouts like juniors Kellen Lockwood, Lucas Whitehill and Mike Miller were the inside forces that helped control the rebounds that helped lead the Mustangs into the playoffs. The Mustangs went into the playoffs on a high note having won three straight, but they had to travel to Yucaipa for their first round game and came away with an 82-72 loss.

The girls’ team once again had a magical season after playing for a state title the year before. Amanda Johnson returned for her senior year to lead the Lady Mustangs to a 22-8 overall record and an undefeated Bay League season. They started out with a 9-2 record, with both losses coming in the nationally recognized Nike Tournament of Champions in Arizona. One of the losses was to ThunderRidge (Highlands Ranch, Colorado) in a 32-31 thriller. The Grizzlies (23-4) were one of Colorado’s top teams this year.

After going 4-4 during the middle of the season, the Mustangs put together an 11-game win streak to finish off the year and go into the playoffs on a roll. The Mustangs continued their hot streak against Channel Islands and West Ranch (Valencia) before taking on CIF powerhouse and second-seeded Buena in the quarterfinals. Lucy Codron had perhaps her best game by sparking the Mustangs to a 44-39 win over the Bulldogs and move Mira Costa into the semifinals for the third straight year. Their season came to an end with their 45-37 loss to Edison (Huntington Beach).

The Mustangs’ fall and winter teams excelled in every way, as all of them reached their goal of getting to the playoffs. There weren’t any Mustang CIF championship teams crowned, but they played as champions still the same. Next week: A look at the spring sports and how the teams fared.

