

Two Big Wins for Boys' Water Polo



Morgan Sommo prepares to lob which caught Palm Springs goalie off guard for a goal. Photos by Shelley Kemp, www.Kemp.Photorelect.com

Provided by Riley Brady

The El Segundo High School boys' water polo team came up with two big wins and now finds itself in the CIF semifinals, just two wins shy of its first CIF title in some 50 years. Coming off an Ocean League title, the boys advanced into the CIF playoffs as the number two seed in Division 5.

El Segundo's first-round test was Fullerton High School. The Eagles were clearly the favorite as Fullerton was an unranked opponent. However, Fullerton came in fired up and ready to test the Eagles' game. A huge first half by senior co-captains Beau Blacksten and Max Reynolds put the Eagles up by a

score of 8-3 at the half. Despite the solid first half play, the Eagles suffered what looked to be a big blow as senior defensive specialist Csaba Nagy was forced to exit the game with a cut over his left eye after receiving an unwarranted head butt while dominating his opponent in the center position.

With Nagy out of the game the Eagles struggled to score in the second half, resulting in a closer than expected 11-5 victory over Fullerton. Not to be forgotten was the outstanding play of goalkeeper Christopher Cordobes, who recorded a season-high 13 saves.

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Eagles Cross Country Qualifies for CIF-SS Finals!



El Segundo girls just before their breakout performance at CIF-SS Prelims

Provided by Doug Sersun

Backed by seven lifetime personal bests over the famed cross country course at Mt. San Antonio College, the El Segundo High School varsity girls cross country team placed 12th out of 41 teams at the CIF-Southern Section Division IV Cross Country Preliminaries on Saturday, November 13. "A truly inspired performance" said Assistant Cross Country Coach Doug Sersun. "These ladies did something exceptional today. I'm very proud of them." The excitement over this team continues to build as their performance qualifies them for section finals to be held this coming Saturday.

Freshman Megan Freiburger was the Eagle's top finisher placing 15th in her race, clocking a time of 19:58. lassmate Anna Farello followed close behind placing 19th (20:24) and set a personal record (PR) by 59 seconds in the process. Sophomore Darcy Brown followed in 33rd (21:17, a 43 second PR). Senior McKenzie Lee secured the 42nd spot (22:01, a 1 minute 10 second PR) and freshman Macy Vezina rounded out the top five Eagle scorers in 43rd (22:03, a 1 minute and 21 second PR). Freshman Mandie Segura placed 46th (22:13, a 4 minute 19 second PR)

and Senior Molly McCue was 66th (24:29) demonstrating the depth of talent El Segundo has developed. With four freshmen and a sophomore in their top seven runners, El Segundo was the youngest team competing in their race signifying great things to come for Eagles Country in the years ahead. Senior Ilana Licassi and Freshman Colleen Marcus continue to train with the team, as alternates, ready to step up, in case someone becomes injured or ill.

"I'm thrilled," said Head Coach Holly Lipscomb. "This group of girls is very special. Their enthusiasm and teamwork is inspiring. They've worked hard and had a lot of fun in the process." Coach Lipscomb plans to build on this success. "This year's team has put cross country on the map here at El Segundo. Next year's team looks to be even better."

The Varsity girl's team heads back to Mt. SAC for CIF-Southern Section Division IV Finals this Saturday, November 21. Race time is 9:05 a.m. The top seven team finishers in their 16-school division finals race move on to the State Cross Country meet in Fresno on November 28.

Eagles Get Spiked in Second Round

By Gregg McMullin

The El Segundo girls' volleyball team had a nice run this year behind first year coach Carrie Dodd. The Eagles ended up second in the Pioneer League behind highly touted South Torrance. They played inspired matches with some of the top teams from Southern California in the Redondo Power Classic Tournament and advanced to the second round of the CIF Southern Section Division II-AA playoffs. After disposing of Rowland in the first round, the Eagles bowed to fifth-ranked Beckman High School (Irvine) in the second round.

The Eagles took care of Rowland 25-18, 25-15, 25-20 in the first round. Nicole Nootbaar had three straight aces in the second game to help seal the game over the Raiders. In the third game with the Eagles trailing, Ashley Thoman served five consecutive aces for points to tie the game at 12-12. Toni Alugbue took over from there to lead the Eagles to the three-game sweep of the third place team from the San Antonio League.

The Eagles advanced to the second round to host Beckman (24-8) in an electrifying four-game match. With the team's adrenaline running wild and a loud and inspiring home crowd giving the Eagles a boost, the Patriots withstood the Eagles' bid for a come-from-behind win throughout the match as El Segundo fell 24-26, 20-25, 25-21, 22-25.

Beckman comes from one of the top Orange County leagues, the Sea View League, where it placed second behind one of the top seeded teams Corona Del Mar. The Patriots are a big, physical team led by Stanford-

bound Lydia Bai, and have the nucleus of big hitters to support her.

The Eagles on the other hand are a much smaller team comprised of energetic athletes who have pulled together. Junior Toni Alugbue is unquestionably one of the Eagles' top players and she showed it against Beckman. In the first game, Alugbue brought her team back from a large deficit as the Eagles forged ahead 20-17. But the Patriots outscored the Eagles 9-4 the rest of the way to take game one 26-24.

In the second game, Shawna Lum came up with some digs and blocks to keep the Eagles close. At one point the Eagles led 13-12, but Beckman continued its assault and came up with the 25-20 win.

In the third game, the two teams kept trading points before the Eagles rattled off four straight to take a 15-12 lead.

Miranda Gagnier came up with the biggest block of the game on Bai to make it 19-13 and the Eagles went on to close out the game 25-21.

In the fourth game Keely Stevenson's kill gave the Eagles a 10-8 lead, but the Patriots kept pounding the ball for points in spite of a number of blocks and digs by Nicole Tamura, Lum, Gagnier and Alugbue. The Eagles tied the game at 20-20 and Alugbue's kill cut the lead to 23-22 before Beckman closed out the game and match.

In a match that few outsiders gave El Segundo a chance at winning, the Eagles showed why they could be contenders in 2010 with a number of players returning next year. •

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