

# Eagles Intercept CIF Playoff Win

By Gregg McMullin

For the second consecutive year, the El Segundo High School football team was forced to make a long bus ride for its first round CIF Southern Section Northwest Division playoff game. A year ago the Eagles traveled to Oxnard, while this year they journeyed to Ojai. And much like last year when the Eagles won easily over Santa Clara, El Segundo opened a 10-0 lead in the first half and went on to beat the Nordoff Rangers 24-7.

Not too many high school football observers gave the Eagles much of a chance at beating Nordoff (8-3) since the Rangers had had an eight-game winning streak at one point of their season. They also had a prolific offense, scoring at will against many teams this year, while also featuring a defense that mirrors the Eagles. "On paper we're very similar to Nordoff. They're not real big and we should match up with them pretty well," said defensive coordinator Dan Heck before the game.

Though Nordoff had beaten some pretty good teams this year, the Rangers weren't expecting that El Segundo would be as challenging of an opponent as it turned out to be. The Eagles' defense would force six turnovers, including five interceptions, and sack the quarterback four times on the bitterly cold 41 degree night. The El Segundo offense did just enough on the night to keep the ball away from the Rangers and put up a couple of scores. Still it was another awkward night for the Eagles, as they committed 14 penalties for 95 yards. "We've been making too many mistakes lately and the flags have been flying against us, and I guess that most of them were warranted," said Heck.

Nordoff had seven possessions in the first half and moved the ball consistently against El Segundo. Each time the Rangers were in position to score, the Eagles' defense came up with big plays. Jimmy Quiñones returned an interception 43 yards that set up El Segundo's first touchdown, while defensive end Michael Rae came up with two sacks in the second quarter to help thwart Nordoff drives. Quiñones came up with the second of three interceptions on the night midway through the second quarter as the Rangers were making their way into El Segundo territory.

The Eagles' first points of the game came on their first drive of the night. After a lackluster punt by Rangers' punter Jude Rhodes gave them great field position, the Eagles used up over four minutes on a nine-play drive to get the ball to the Nordoff nine yard line. From there Grant Palmer connected on a 28-yard field goal to give the Eagles a 3-0 lead. El Segundo would up their lead on the first play of the second quarter. After Quiñones intercepted Skyler Logsden and went 43 yards to the Nordoff 14 yard line, Eagle quarterback Michael Bundy connected with Hunter Hovland two plays later for a 13-yard touchdown pass and a 10-0 lead.

Nordoff's next drive went for nothing once again when their drive stalled at El Segundo's 38 yard line. Starting at their own 20 yard line, running back Justin Burgess found running room against the Eagles by rushing four times for 36 yards during the drive. Helped along by El Segundo penalties, the Rangers were in striking distance at the Eagles' 38. On fourth down and inches, Brandon Jimenez and a host of Eagles snuffed Nordoff's Cody Doolittle behind the line of scrimmage. The Rangers had one last possession before halftime, but Sean DeFrancesco intercepted Logsden and returned it 20 yards. The Eagles ran out the clock to go in leading 10-0 at halftime.

The Eagles came up with another turnover early in the third quarter after their punt to start the second half. After a short series, the Eagles' Grant Palmer's punt was muffed near midfield and recovered by Nigel Nootbaar. The Eagles couldn't make the most of the opportunity when their extended drive was stalled. Palmer punted once again and Michael Rae downed the ball inside the Ranger one yard line. Nordoff would embark on a 14-play, five-minute drive to the El Segundo 17 yard line where Rhode's 35-yard field goal was wide.

In the fourth quarter, the Eagles extended their lead on a break. Bundy, who was 8 for 16 for 122 yards and two touchdown passes on the night, overthrew Nootbaar slightly but a Nordoff defender deflected the pass and Quiñones took the tipped ball in stride and ran untouched the final 40 yards for a touchdown. That gave the Eagles a somewhat

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# El Segundo High Girls Basketball Readies for First Tip Off



ESHS basketball team. Front Row, L-R: Mika Hongo, Kristin Bucher, Lauren Villaneuva, Stephanie Gee, Amy Reaser; Back Row, L-R: Lauren Sato, Nicole Goldbach, Miranda Gagnier, Anisha Tyagi, Erin Sato, Head Coach Kelly Geis: Photo: Provided by Rick Rease.

By Rick Reaser

The Lady Eagles girls basketball team is anxious and prepared to rocket into the upcoming prep girls basketball season. This summer, they played in the prestigious San Diego Classic Basketball tournament, finishing as the Pool 4 consolation champs and outscoring their opponents overall 205 to 198. They also played in summer and fall off-season leagues to hone their skills. Things are coming together well for what promises to be an exciting and impressive run on the court.

Newly hired head girls basketball coach, and 2002 El Segundo basketball Alum, Kelly Geis is very optimistic about the upcoming season. "We're building on last year's bright spots and look to finish within the top three in Pioneer League and move into CIF-SS Division 4AA Playoffs. The girls are learning an entirely new "system" and are totally on board with what we are trying to accomplish. They are making my job incredibly easy. We

are looking to make some "heads turn" in the South Bay with our up tempo offense and defense."

The Lady Eagles have three returning starters to draw upon. Last year's Most Valuable Player, Sophomore Lauren Sato, will be the focus of the offense. She is one of the most unrecognized players in the South Bay. This season, Lauren is certain to make jaws drop with her skill at hitting the outside shot. She also can run the floor and get to the basket. Her sister, Senior Erin Sato, is returning Defensive Player of the Year and selected as this year's Team Captain. Erin will be playing a new position this year, small forward, as well as taking on a bulk of the team's defensive responsibilities. The Eagles will be relying on Erin to score from the paint and to step out and knock down outside shots. Senior Miranda Gagnier is the lone returning post player. She is one of the fastest players on

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