

Varsity Water Polo Team Has Best Summer in School History!

By George Harris, Jr.

The 2009 El Segundo boys' varsity water polo team had a summer to remember. Not only did they win their first tournament championship, but even without two or three key players they were able to defeat the top Inland schools that deterred a frustrated Eagle squad in 2008. Playing under the club banner of Gundo Aquatics (all members attend El Segundo High School), the team upset several top teams (they could have been missing some starters also), so hopefully an impressive summer will be reflected in the first preseason poll. Division V is the only division with just two representatives on the CIF Coaches Committee (all other seven divisions have three). The two representatives are from Los Osos and Arlington High Schools and they had voted to keep out any western representation. Both schools are about 60 miles east of El Segundo and the Ocean League teams.

In 2008, the polls never changed as Santa Monica (deservedly ranked number four) made it to the CIF DV semifinals. El Segundo and Torrance remained at the number nine and 10 rankings (and both lost second round games). The Eagles suffered the worst, however, having to play a weak third place Freeway League team at home before having to travel 140 miles the next morning to play number six Palm Desert High School. The Eagles lost that game 16-11 despite being tied 6-6 at the half.

Santa Monica High returns most of its starters, but must get by the Eagles in the first home night game in El Segundo High School (ESHS) history, starting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20 at the Urho Saari Swim Stadium. We encourage all ESHS fans to pack the place, including the Santa Monica (visitor) side. Last season, the Eagles played to a standing room only crowd on the ESHS side and even had Elmer and Elma Eagle (school mascots) show up for the game. It was 5-5 going into the fourth quarter, but the Vikings scored four unanswered goals to win going away 9-6. Santa Monica agreed to the offer of the night game, which was also extended to the Vikings to play their

final double-round game at Santa Monica High on Wednesday, November 5 at 7 p.m.

There are no mysteries to the Eagles magical summer. All information can be found by visiting this reporter's website at El Segundo Unified School District, El Segundo High School. Click on "faculty" and then the reporter's name (<http://sites.google.com/site/eshsh2opolo/>). We have nothing to hide, but this team must continue to improve or we'll be in the same situation as 2008.

Despite playing an abbreviated summer schedule (CIF Division V--Gundo played only 22 games in June and July), seniors Beau Blacksten, Max Reynolds and Morgan Sommo took full advantage and certainly improved. This was due to impressive performances with their other All-Star club (Trojan WPC, which practiced at USC five nights a week). They also spent their summer working out diligently with the Gundo Aquatics Club two mornings a week and participated in about 50 percent of the games.

Blacksten continued to be "Mr. Magic" for the Eagle offense as he scored 82 goals in the 13 games he played, including 40 total markers at the Crescenta Valley Tournament. He scored eight against the defending CIF Division VI champions in their home pool and seven against Division V foe La Serna. Blacksten had six or more five-goal games, the most impressive against Esperanza High School in the Villa Park II Tournament in July as he hammered home seven out of the eight Gundo goals at the home team (Esperanza - a CIF Division I team) home site. He scored 125 goals in 2008 and has a career total of 181, so he should challenge for the high school record set 23 years ago of 316. If Blacksten continues his steady improvement, he certainly should be considered as a candidate for Division V Player of the Year.

Not to be lost in the shuffle is the senior Reynolds, whose speed and counterattack style led the team in assists, while he also blistered the canvas on 31 occasions. Seniors Sommo, Robert Cordobes and Stephen Lasky scored 25, 13 and six goals apiece. Cordobes was the team's sprinter, which almost always

See Polo page 21

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