

Mustangs Miss Their Opportunity in Season Opener



Mustang head coach Don Morrow and quarterback Adam Lawrence during a timeout.

By Gregg McMullin

The Mira Costa High School football team traveled to play Loyola at Los Angeles Valley College to open the 2009 season for both teams. A year ago, the Cubs visited the Mustangs and came away with a 23-7 loss. It was then the Mustangs got their first taste of facing Loyola running back Anthony Barr, who dominated the game by rushing for 242 yards. The Mustangs once again faced the talented Division I prospect, but the defense held him to 128 yards this time. Mistakes and missed opportunities doomed the Mustangs as they fell 28-18.

Preparing for a team like Loyola is tantamount to preparing for a playoff team since the Cubs are not only one of the top teams in Southern California, but they also boast a roster filled with potential college prospects besides Barr. However, the Mustangs not only have an experienced squad, but they too have a talented roster of athletes capable of playing at the next level.

The Mustangs pinned Loyola deep in their own territory to start the game. After three penalties and some great defense in stopping Barr, the Mustangs received great field position but couldn't capitalize on Loyola's generosity. Mira Costa running back Morgan Reece moved the ball successfully on consecutive plays to get the ball to the Cub 21 yard line, but the Mustangs' first series stalled out and they had to settle for a 40-yard field goal attempt that was just wide right.

The Mustangs got on the scoreboard first after they once again were given great field position. The defense led by JR Tavai and Marcus Probasco sacked Loyola's prized quarterback Jerry Neuheisel (UCLA head coach Rick Neuheisel's son) near the Cubs' seven yard line. On Mira Costa's second play after the Cubs' punt, Kyle Demarco found Kyle Nunn open over the middle for a 40-yard touchdown play.

Loyola scored their only offensive touchdown of the first half in just two plays. The Cubs got great field position near midfield and made the most of it with a 16-yard pass play to Nat Bellamy. On the next play, Barr took the handoff and shook off one Mustang to get around the left side on his way to a 32-yard touchdown run.

Still the Mustangs were moving the ball well in the first half, and when they got the ball back with 5:10 left, the plan was to use up as much time on the clock as they could. Kellen Lockwood took the ball on a draw play for 11 yards to keep the chains moving. Mike Miller picked up a key first down with another 11-yard reception to get the ball down to the Cubs' 28 yard line. After a sack and penalty moved the ball back to Loyola's 30 yard line, the Mustangs made another mistake. With under a minute to go in the half, Demarco scrambled for 14 yards

to get the ball to the 16 yard line. But on the next play, Barr intercepted Demarco's pass in the left flat and raced 87 yards untouched for the go-ahead 14-7 score just before halftime.

The Mustangs proved they could play with one of the top CIF Division I teams in the first half, but the mistakes they made were costly. "I wouldn't say the interception near the first half was a game changer, but it sure gave them some momentum going in at halftime," said Mustang head coach Don Morrow.

The Mustangs' game plan on defense was right on, limiting the Cubs to just three first half first downs. They also forced the Cubs to attempt a 30-yard field goal that was missed after Loyola had moved the ball deep into Mira Costa's side of the field. The Mustangs also sacked Neuheisel three times in the first half, and that had to please defensive coordinator Ray Lee.

In the second half, mistakes and more missed opportunities doomed the Mustangs. Mira Costa was driving for a score in the third quarter, but on fourth and inches at the Cubs' 13 yard line, JR Tavai was stopped at the line of scrimmage. He was driven backwards for no gain and the Mustangs came away with another missed opportunity.

Midway into the quarter, Jordan Tavai recovered a fumble at Loyola's 15 yard line but had to settle for an Alex Noroceca 32-yard field goal to close the gap to 14-10. But Loyola answered on their ensuing possession when Jared Baker turned the corner on the right side on his way to a 64-yard touchdown run to make it 21-10.

The mark of a good team is not folding in light of some adversity, and the Mustangs certainly didn't in this situation. Demarco found one of the South Bay's top receivers, Kyle Nunn, for a 19-yard gain to the Loyola 35 yard line. Two plays later Demarco threw a perfectly led pass to Nunn and the speedster went into the end zone untouched. The Mustangs scored a two-point PAT to cut the lead to 21-18 and the Mustangs had the Cubs on their heels.

Loyola then put on an exhibition on how to keep the ball away from your opponent with a 17-play, 77-yard drive that consumed more than eight minutes of the fourth quarter. On the drive, Loyola picked up five first downs while passing just three times during the drive. It ended on a six-yard touchdown run by Barr to make it 28-18. With that, the hopes for a Mira Costa comeback were dashed.

Mira Costa played well and at times outplayed Loyola, but missed opportunities cost them a game they should have won. It was a good game to gauge the Mustangs and what to expect from them this year as they battle to return not only to the playoffs,

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Police Reports

Compiled by Evan Ortega
STOLEN MEDICATION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

A woman and her husband parked in the lower north pier parking lot at noon. The woman has a tumor on her spine and carries a prescription for 100mg and 30mg Morphine pills to help ease her pain. The woman packed the Morphine pills, along with her husband's iPod, his Prednisone and \$80 into a plastic grocery bag. As they walked on the beach, west of 12th Street, carrying their towels and other items, the woman struggled because of her condition. The pair returned to their car at about 3:30 p.m. and could not find the bag after searching the area. The woman's doctor advised her to file a police report, which she did days later.

UNHAPPY CAMPER
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

Police responded to a residence in the 1800 block of Herrin Avenue after a woman reported that somebody had vandalized her boyfriend's camper sometime between 8 p.m. the night before and 6:45 a.m. that morning. The vehicle was parked on the curb in front of their residence and police found that the arm supporting the driver's side mirror was bent. The woman said she doesn't have a problem with her neighbors or anyone else.

"HOUSE SITTING" PARTY
THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Police responded to a residence in the 1600 block of Magnolia Avenue at around 9:30 p.m. regarding a burglary in progress. A man had called the police after he checked on the house of his vacationing brother and family, finding more than 30 kids in the house having a party. While the family was vacationing in San Francisco, the homeowner's daughter received a call from a friend that a party was going on in their house. When the homeowner's brother arrived on scene, kids came running out of the house in all directions. One of the juveniles was drunk and the homeowner's brother advised him not to drive. The juvenile then pulled a bike from the bed of a 1999 black Toyota truck, riding southbound on Magnolia Avenue. Police used DMV records to determine the truck was registered to a person with a home address on Lynngrove Drive in Manhattan Beach. An inspection of the house showed no property damage, although the living room and kitchen was littered with empty beer cans on the floor and counters. There was also some beer on the floor. Police determined the intruders gained entry by using a hide-a-key located on the north side of the home. The key was found on the floor of the living room and the homeowner's daughter told her dad that a few friends knew of the key's location. The homeowner wants to prosecute anybody that can be identified and will advise police of any stolen items upon return from his relaxing vacation.

BIKE TO WORK
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

A man locked his \$1,377 Cannondale bike on a rack in the underground parking structure of his work in the 1200 block of Rosecrans Avenue at 8 p.m. Thursday. He returned at 9 a.m. the next day to find his bike and lock missing. The victim provided police with the serial number to the bike in the event it is recovered.

PLAYGROUND PARTY
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

The administrator of a school for young children in the 2100 block of Bell Avenue called police after finding the school playground littered with empty Keystone Light beer cans, children's toys, food items and vomit. The administrator and her employees had left the school the night before around 6:30 p.m. When she returned around 7 a.m. Friday, an employee told her about the mess, which caused no permanent damage. The administrator said she gave nobody permission to drink alcohol on the playground that night. The administrator told police she will

try to find surveillance footage of what happened and wants to prosecute anybody that can be identified. Police took into evidence a Calico lighter, five Sports Craft ping pong balls, pens and change, a T-Mobile SIM Card, seventeen 12oz cans of Keystone Light beer, sixteen red cups, a brown bag containing a note pad and three-inch glass marijuana pipe, a Maharaja brand Hookah pipe, and a black Quicksilver backpack containing thirty 12oz cans of Keystone Light beer.

STOLEN BIKE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

A woman last saw her \$800 Cannondale bike locked and secured to a wooden post in the carport of her residence in the morning, located in the 1400 block of Manhattan Avenue. She returned home at about 3:30 p.m. to find the bike and her \$100 New York bicycle lock missing, and that the wooden post securing her bike had been broken and moved from its base. The woman told police that this was the second time in six months that her locked and secured bikes were taken from her carport. She did not have the serial number to her bike.

STOLEN BIKE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

A woman and her friend let their items unattended at the beach in the area of 17th Street and the waterline around 1:15 p.m. They returned 15 minutes later to find a beach bag was missing. The bag, worth \$40, contained two house keys, a car key and a \$19 ladies grey T-shirt. Two hours later they flagged down officers who were conducting a beach patrol and reported the crime.

STOLEN KEYS
SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

A husband and wife drove their electric golf cart to the home of the wife's parents, located in the 200 block of 20th Street, parking it in the alley. The woman left the keys on the kitchen counter, only a few feet from the back door, which was unlocked and open. The back door can be accessed from walking through a gate, which was also unlocked. At around 2 p.m. the couple left for the beach, returning four hours later to find the garage door opener, located in the cup-holder of the golf cart missing. The keys to the golf cart that the woman left on the counter were also missing. The victims believe somebody took the keys to the vehicle and planned on stealing it. The parents of the victims were home the entire time but did not hear or notice anything going on.

ITHEFT
SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

A man perked his vehicle in the upper parking lot of an electronics store in the 3600 block of North Sepulveda Blvd. at 3:05 p.m. He put his \$550 iPhone on the center console of his vehicle, in plain view, before exiting the vehicle. He went inside the electronics store and returned 15 minutes later to find his phone missing. Police observed no signs of forced entry and determined that the suspect most likely gained entry to the vehicle because it was unlocked. The man said he could not be sure he locked his vehicle.

WALLET LOST IN CHURCH
SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

An elderly woman visited a church in the 1200 block of Artesia Boulevard at 8 a.m., placing her wallet in her purse just before services began. She returned home an hour-and-a-half later, discovering her wallet was no longer in her purse. She returned to the church and was unable to find her wallet. She thinks it fell out of her purse and onto the floor due to the repeated standing and sitting during the service. •

