

Mustangs Gallup Into the Season With Confidence



Andrew Brenner (70) and Brett Darragh (65) are returning starters on the offensive line.

By Gregg McMullin

With the National Football League winding their preseason schedule down and the college scene set to make its debut Saturday, it's the high school level's turn to take the football field. The Mira Costa Mustangs reached the CIF finals last December with a junior dominated team. So Mustang head coach Don Morrow has confidence in this year's team that it'll play hard and have continued success this year. "Our strength will be the experience returning and this team's work ethic and playing 14 games last year," said Morrow.

Expectations for this year's team are high and the coaching staff doesn't want their team to rest on what they accomplished in 2008. To get ready for this season, they have been working out on a consistent basis and have competed in a number of passing leagues, including tournaments in Beverly Hills, Hart and Mission Viejo.

Coach Morrow believes this year's offense will be more balanced and not have to rely on the running game so much. He says he has a couple of goals for the Mustangs this year that includes winning a second consecutive Bay League title and going deep in the playoffs. "I like our chances with this group and they're a great bunch to be around," he said.

The experience returning is on both sides of the ball and, according to Morrow, a number of players could see action both ways. The Mustangs lost a small number of players to graduation. Replacing the likes of linemen Mike Freeman (Cal State SLO) and Matt Williams (Fresno State) may be tough, but the Mustang coaching staff has the confidence in the returning players and the promotion of some key junior varsity players. Another strength that the Mustangs have, besides

experience, will be the fact these players have played together for so long. Most of them played on a successful freshman team and an undefeated junior varsity team before playing on the varsity, so this is their fourth year together.

Last year's defense was as good as any that the Mustangs have had in years, and defensive coordinator Ray Lee believes this year's squad could exceed last year's team. The Mustangs gave up just 17 points a game in 2008. That statistic will surely be lower this year with 10 starters returning, led by All-CIF players JR Tavai, Kellen Lockwood and Morgan Reece.

The defensive line players won't be particularly large, but they'll be quick off the line and their athleticism should be a factor. Jake Jelmini (DE), Mike Miller and Jordan Tavai at defensive tackle, and Jordan's brother JR Tavai at nose tackle could be as formidable as any line in the South Bay. Kellen Lockwood (75 tackles and four sacks), Kyle Demarco and Morgan Reece will be at the linebacker spots and Jackson Morrow, Kyle Nunn and Rico Wright (five interceptions) return to the secondary. One player they'll miss is Brian Fifita, who transferred to perennial powerhouse Oaks Christian.

According to Lee, this defensive unit, "gets after it," swarms to the ball, and they are as good as he has coached in years. The defense will rely on its quickness rather than its size to stop the opposition. There were some expectations last year that the defense would keep the team in games and this year, the expectations are that the defense will dominate. The Mustangs had a two-game stretch with Narbonne and Newport Harbor where the defense had some lapses, but that

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Dear Carol

Dear Carol,

My nephew and his wife are coming for a visit. They are young, fun-loving and have stayed with me before. I've gone out of my way to make sure they have a good time. I buy lots of good food and drink for them and usually get tickets for a play or concert for all of us to enjoy. I recently retired and can no longer afford to treat them in such a generous way. They can afford to pay their own way but I've always had the role of generous hostess. How can I give them a hint that their financial contribution would really be appreciated?

Anxious Auntie

Dear Auntie,

There is no need to hint and hope that they get the message; they should contribute financially to the fun. If you would like to avoid a face to face conversation about finances just write them a brief note telling them how much you are looking forward to their visit and, because of your newly retired status you would like them to pay their own way. Wait until they arrive to do the major shopping for their visit; they can split the grocery and drink bill with you. We all get into habits in our relationships, expecting people and situations to stay the same. It is a kindness to let others know about lifestyle changes otherwise misunderstandings can lead to anger and confusion.

Dear Carol,

I live in a nice condo townhouse. Almost everyone gets along really well even though there is a real mix of people here. We have young singles, families with young children and retired folks. There is one grouchy old man who objects to just about everything. He yells at the children when they make drawings in chalk on the concrete in the courtyard. I think their art is beautiful and should be encouraged. He says he is going to go to the condominium association board and have the parents of the child artists fined for putting graffiti on the sidewalks. I think that is a terrible idea but I don't know how to stop him.

Art Appreciator

Dear Appreciator,

Get your neighbors who agree with you to go to the meeting so you can express your opinions. The condominium board is elected by the home owners and they would probably like to hear from more than just one resident. If others won't go with you please create a petition supporting the children's sidewalk chalk art, have the residents sign with their unit numbers and present that to the board. The majority should be able to establish a reasonable rule. Please make an effort to smile at this unhappy person, engage him in friendly conversation. Perhaps he is just lonely and needs something positive in his life.

Send questions to askcarolnow@gmail.com.

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

The recent death of Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, who held his senatorial job for 47 years, got me to looking back in time a bit, back to when I became interested in the political game. Remember, now, I am 50-plus years old, so I was just a tyke when JFK was assassinated in Dallas back in November of '63. By the way, Ted Kennedy officially announced his candidacy for the Senate back in 1962, on March 14. My third birthday. Try finding that info out anywhere else, folks. That's what makes this column so darn special.

For some reason, I became fascinated with the JFK mystique and began reading books about the Kennedy dynasty, and also about the machinations that got one elected to the highest office in our land. I immersed myself in the tomes written by Theodore White, called *The Making of the President*. Think Mr. White penned four books in the series, starting with the JFK victory over one Richard M. Nixon in 1960.

White's books were page-turning reading for a young guy interested in the presidency, who is ashamed to admit that I haven't read a book cover-to-cover for a great while until I recently finished the high school football chronicle *Friday Night Lights*, while I wasn't catching any fish on my recent Easter Sierra alleged fishing trip.

From the Kennedy win in 1960 to the smashing defeat of George McGovern, who was steamrolled by the incumbent Prez, one Richard Milhouse Nixon, who suffered some down years and down times in the political game before resurfacing and kicking the daylights out of Hubert Horacio Humphrey in 1968, when Humphrey became the lefty standard-bearer after the incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson turtled and didn't seek re-election, and charismatic candidate Bobby Kennedy was assassinated after winning the Cali primary. Boy, was that a long, run-on sentence. Intentional folks, could you keep up? Just checking.

Found the Kennedy clan and their back stories incredibly interesting. Yup, bootlegger daddy, Marilyn Monroe in the buff, all that stuff. Like any normal guy wouldn't be the least bit intrigued by Ms. Monroe, right? Back in the day, after reading the White books, thought that what I would like to do when I actually grew up, and the

time is coming, folks, would be to manage a political campaign. Didn't want to be the guy out front cuz I probably wasn't dynamic enough to be a candidate.

Quick aside to all of you oldsters. Did you ever see the movie *The Candidate*, starring the one-time starlet Robert Redford? Hit the screens in 1972 and basically was about a lib senatorial candidate in the Great Bankrupt State (not then), who got embroiled in a statewide election campaign with no chance to win. So he said whatever the hell he wanted, cuz he had no chance to win, right. And guess what? The people listened to his heartfelt musings, the polls got tighter, and lo and behold, Redford actually won! And then uttered a line that stays with me to this day. The victorious Redford asked the guys and dolls who got him elected, "What do we do now?" You gotta believe the same type of quote was bandied about by the Governor after he somehow took power.

One more aside...Did any of you watch the TV show *The West Wing*? Loved that stuff. Miss all of the ins and outs of the Bartlett White House. Guess we don't need those types of shows today, not when we have great shows like...any of the bleeping reality fare that is clogging the airwaves. Criminy, is there some garbage currently on the tube.

Back to the point...Which was...Oh, yeah, I was telling you that I yearned to be a political campaign manager when I grew up. Much like the incredibly handsome James Carville, who was one of the masterminds of the longshot Bill Clinton presidential campaign in the early '90s. Pull the strings behind the scenes. Course, like most things in life, thinking about it and doing it are two different things, right?

So I sit here in the mansion, making pithy, and according to some, off-the-mark observations about the week that was in the political game.

What is that old saying? Those who can't do, teach. Maybe it should be, those who can't do, write about it? Maybe I botched the line, but you get the idea, right? What a cheap shot at teachers who are such a valuable asset to all of us.

Plank considered going the teaching route back in the day. Bout 20 years ago. Took the CBEST test, passed it, but then bombed

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