

Lady Eagles Win Whittier Basketball Tourney

By Rick Reaser

Heads are turning with El Segundo's first ever girls basketball tournament championship under its belt. The Lady Eagles defeated host Whittier Christian, 61-60, in the final game of the Whittier Christian High School Leon Davis Holiday Classic. El Segundo chalked up four victories in just as many days, to kick off a season that promises to open a new chapter in Eagle athletics.

The Eagles handily triumphed over their first three opponents, Beckman, Irvine, 50-40, Ocean View, Huntington Beach, 59-35 and Saddleback Valley Christian, San Juan Capistrano, 57-15. In the finals, they faced the Whittier Christian Heralds who pride themselves on a strong girls basketball program, being the CIF-SS Division VAA Champions in 2007 and 2008. Amazingly, the Eagles made easy work of the Heralds for the first three quarters of the game, leading by 10 to 15 points most of the way. But in the final four minutes, Whittier poured it on and wiped out an eight point deficit, tying the game 60-60, with 8 seconds remaining on the clock. Junior Mika Hongo was fouled

then made one of two free throws with three seconds left to put the Eagles ahead by one. Freshman Stephanie Gee stole the ball on the ensuing inbound pass cementing the win for El Segundo.

Sophomore Lauren Sato had 21 points and five assists. Sister, Senior Erin Sato had 20 points and eight rebounds.

Hongo added seven points for El Segundo. Sophomore Lauren Villanueva and Freshman Gee shut down Whittier Christian's 2009 All Area Selection player Senior Callie Rohrbacker who averaged 10.4 points per game last year.

With an impressive 20 points per game and 4.8 assists per game, Lauren Sato was named the tournament Most Valuable Player. Erin Sato (13.3 points per game and 6.3 rebounds per game) and Hongo (6.8 points per game and 75% from the free throw line) were also all-tournament picks.

After a pre-season match-up with Mary Star of the Sea Stars, the Eagles head to Cerritos to show their stuff at the Valley Christian Tournament, December 15-19. •

Eagles Look to Ride the Ryan Express This Year

By Gregg McMullin

The high school basketball season is upon us and with it the El Segundo Eagles have started their season playing in the Serrano Tournament. Though the Eagles lost a number of players to graduation, they do return most of their starting lineup. Three key players that return are seniors Tyler Hagan, Sean De Francesco and John Ryan as well as junior forward Brandon Jawato. The Eagles made it a clean sweep, having gone to the postseason CIF Southern Sections playoffs in each of the past 10 years of this decade. This year's team looks to continue that playoff streak and compete for a Pioneer League title.

It has been a long time since the Eagles have been crowned league champions. Being in the ultra competitive Pioneer League with the likes of Centennial, North Torrance and Torrance has at times made it an uphill battle. Nonetheless this year's Eagles squad is ready to compete with another viable team ready for the challenges. "We're going to be a little different team than we have been in the past," said longtime legendary coach Rick Sabosky. "We have a great bunch of players eager to get up and down the court."

Ryan looks to be the centerpiece of the offense and at nearly 6'10," he'll be one of the biggest centers in the area too. Ryan, a three-year starter, has all the tools that will make the Eagles a force inside. Besides his rebounding abilities, he is a proficient shot blocker. He blocked 111 shots last season, averaging nearly five blocks per game.

The senior, who has already signed a letter of intent to play basketball in college, is a capable shooter from all over. He has a nice touch from the three-point line as well as being an inside force where he averaged 14 points per game and hit better than half of his shot attempts.

One of the better juniors in the area this year will be playing alongside Ryan. Brandon Jawato is in his second year as a starting forward for the Eagles and he has what it takes to get to the next level. The 6'3" junior certainly plays much taller than he is and he has the ball handling and shooting skills that will unquestionably draw interest from

college recruiters. As a sophomore, Jawato led the Eagles in assists and steals and was second in scoring and rebounding behind Ryan. "Brandon is a complete player who plays offense and defense and isn't selfish," said Sabosky.

One guard spot will be filled by three-year letterman Tyler Hagan. Hagan is a career 52 percent two-point shooter who has great ball handling skills--something that the Eagles will need against teams that put pressure on the guards.

Once Sean DeFrancesco, a standout on the football team, gets up to speed with his basketball teammates, he should move into the lineup. DeFrancesco is another keen ball handler and will bring the ball up court and help direct and guide the offense. He will also be looked upon to cover the opposition's top guards, especially with his quickness and tenacious defense abilities.

Others who will be looked upon for their leadership and basketball skills include seniors Eric Nixon, Brandon Sim, Nico Diy and Malique Pratt. Rounding out the team will be juniors Brandon Lopez, Brandon Reynoso, Matt Fonseca, David Howard and Ahmed Mahmood.

The Eagles kicked off their season by splitting their first four games in the Serrano Tournament.

El Segundo opened the tournament by defeating Granite Hills 74-51, with John Ryan leading all scorers with 19 points while Tyler Hagen and Brandon Jawato each had 17 points. In the second game, El Segundo fell to North (Riverside) 67-62 in a game in which the Eagles came out cold and were playing catch-up throughout.

In the third game, Ryan's 23 points and 22 rebounds weren't enough to overcome a smaller and quicker Victor Valley team.

The Jackrabbits hit from three-point range to stave off the Eagles and hold on for an 84-77 win. In the final game of the tournament, the Eagles mauled Kaiser (Riverside) 62-48 in a game that wasn't as close as the final score would indicate. El Segundo's tenacious defense held the Cats to 31 percent field goal shooting.

Curbside



COMPLETE COVERAGE | 2009 LOS ANGELES AUTO SHOW BY ANTHONY B. BARTHEL

Once again people from all corners of the globe descended on Los Angeles as the 2010 Los Angeles International Auto Show provided a platform for automakers to introduce their new vehicles to the public. More significant than what was shown at the show was who was not there, with Nissan being the biggest company not to have the money to buy a booth at the show. Wow.

What's Hot

Probably the most significant car announced at the show was the Hyundai Sonata. Sonata is Hyundai's mid-size entry and the company indicated that it foresees the days of the V6 in a mid-size sedan as being numbered. With the government's tightening of fuel mileage standards, this makes sense.

The beautiful new Sonata offers more space than comparable Toyota Camry or Nissan Altima models and is powered by either a normally aspirated four-cylinder engine or a turbocharged version thereof. Turbos were in evidence all over the auto show as automakers work hard to turn small engines into powerful ones. The normally-aspirated, direct-injected four offers as much power as the previous V6, showing how far four-bangers have come with fuel efficiency being 12 percent better than even the previous four.

Hyundai promised diesel and hybrid versions of the new sedan, which represents the first of their line to have the new "fluid design." Over 1.2 million Sonatas have been sold since the introduction and Hyundai is now the fourth-largest car company in the world.

So why is this the most significant car? Hyundai is fast becoming a manufacturer that the mainstream buyer would consider and this is an outstanding car in the biggest segment in the car industry. It offers truly standout styling and a beautiful interior at a time when some others appear to be cutting corners with their interiors.

The Sonata offers good value and is built right here in the USA. It also boasts an incredible warranty and styling details that make it feel more premium than the sub-\$20,000 price suggests. While the car will be marketed as a mid-size sedan, it gets an EPA rating as a large car.

Also announced was the new Hyundai Tucson compact SUV. Tucson was designed in Frankfurt, Germany and offers the same four-cylinder engine as the Sonata.

Tiny Tots

A lot of very small cars were introduced at the Auto Show including one that was no surprise, the Ford Fiesta. The Fiesta has been featured in the media already but is significant in that it's truly an international platform, rather than just being focused in one market.

Available in both hatchback and sedan models, the Fiesta offers up to 40 miles per gallon on the highway and is a very attrac-

tive little package. This multi-award-winning subcompact is also available with either standard or turbocharged mini four.

Mazda, too, showed a mini mobile in their Mazda 2, a similar car to the Ford Fiesta. The company boasts that it is the most road raced nameplate around and that its buyers are the second most youthful in the industry.

Chevrolet's smallest announcement was the Cruze, a compact sedan based on European pieces. The Cruze boasts more room than the competition and has 10 air bags. I wonder when these will show up in the trunk to protect luggage?

The Cruze offers an available 1.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine that should return outstanding fuel economy while providing good performance as well. The real standout feature of the European-engineered Cruze was a truly beautiful interior, similar to that of the Chevrolet Malibu. The two-tone interior was a real standout at the auto show and made the Cruze feel like a premium car instead of one of Chevrolet's most affordable entries.

Turbos, Turbos Everywhere

With the government's insistence that carmakers improve their fuel efficiency turbochargers and diesels are becoming a popular method of accomplishing this. A turbo lets you boost the performance of an engine when needed without having to build a bigger engine, so fuel mileage is improved by using a smaller engine that offers performance on demand.

Ford is moving into turbos big time, announcing a turbocharged V6 Mustang and showing their turbocharged (they call it EcoBoost) full-size Taurus. Chevrolet's new compact Cruze can be had with a tiny 1.4-liter turbocharged four and Buick is putting a 2.0-liter turbocharged four on the options list of their new Regal.

While Toyota showed their plug-in Prius hybrid, hybrids really weren't the big news. Diesel was with the Audi A3 diesel, or, TDI winning Green Car of the Year. Diesel offers incredible driving performance, outstanding fuel efficiency and a design that mechanics are familiar with, unlike hybrids. This is the second year in a row that a diesel was presented with this reward with last year's recipient being the Jetta TDI (featuring the same engine as the Audi).

Volkswagen showed a two-cylinder diesel-hybrid called the UpLight, which is based on production pieces but is, essentially, a show car. Weighing in at just 1500 pounds the car is technically good for 100 miles per hour and 70 miles per gallon. The designer said the car could see production by 2011.

Buick jumped on the turbocharger bandwagon with the announcement of its 2011 Regal, a mid-size sedan based heavily on the Opel Insignia. The standard engine is GM's good ol' 2.4 liter four-cylinder but with

