

LocalSports in Almaden Valley



Senior Tam Nguyen rifles a goal past the outstretched hand of Santa Teresa goalie. Photos by Kevin Jones

Chargers Girls' Water Polo derailed by nemesis St. Francis 9-8

By Kevin Jones
Special to the Times

As the Leland girls' varsity water polo season rolls along, the victories have come in high-scoring games. In a span of three matches, the Lady Chargers outscored their opponents (Pioneer, Lincoln and Santa Teresa) 55-14 and seem to be in good position to win their league again this year.

Everyone is getting in on the scoring, but they are also playing some pretty tough defense along the way. The Nolan sisters, senior Kelsey and freshman Jamie are providing a lot of the offensive firepower with plenty of support by seniors Leanne Kirtland, Tam Nguyen, Stacey Koolpe and Jessica Short. Junior "Bob" Sherrin continues her strong play on both ends of the pool. Juniors Rachel Snyder and Caroline Norton have also been impressive in their relief roles this season.

"We're still working on perfecting our pressure defense," said Coach Eric Rise. "We need to make sure we are anticipating on defense. I think the girls have learned that they need to stay intense for every game. We can't overlook any opponent. In the past couple years we were able to sneak up and surprise people. If we can play our game, we can play with anyone. Brianna "Bob" Sherrin has also made significant strides. Her defense is much stronger and aggressive, and her shot has improved exponentially."

The Chargers are somewhat inexperienced at goalie, but the efforts being turned in by sophomore Ashley Arras and Junior Kristen Koolpe should change all that soon enough. "The goalkeepers - Ashley Arras and Kristen Koolpe, have made great progress. They are playing more confidently and aggressively. They have ramped up their intensity level in

games and practice."

Despite all the good things going for the team this season, St. Francis still seems to have their number. This past Saturday at a tournament up in Mountain View the Lancers once again prevailed over the Chargers in a closely contested 9-8 loss. This was a match where Kelsey Nolan found herself mostly double-teamed the entire time and being denied the ball. So, the Chargers did what any good team will do and that is rally to find another way to score with Nguyen and Jamie Nolan accounting for three goals each and Kirtland chipping in for two. The goal scores were made easier with the sharp passing of Koolpe and Sherrin. This was the third meeting in which the Chargers have lost by one goal.

"Our schedule is pretty tough to end the season," said Rise. "After St. Francis on Saturday, we take on Live Oak Wednesday and end the regular season with the Northern California Championships that will feature the top teams from Northern and Central CA."

This group seems to thrive on the challenge of playing the best. They know that only way to find out what you are truly capable of as a team is to test yourself against the toughest competition."



Senior Kelsey Nolan whips in a backhand goal in win over Santa Teresa.

Johnson scores again

Moving on up, Eric Johnson's International Tennis Federation world ranking (for juniors) will be in 200s after last week's tournament win in El Paso, Texas. He now has wins in Canada and U.S., in both singles and doubles.

Johnson leaves next weekend for two more international tournaments being held in South Carolina and Florida, and is working towards qualifying for the Australian Open in January.



Above: El Paso ITF opponent Kyohhei Kamono of Japan, USTA Hall of Fame Referee Annie Moncada, and Eric Johnson after his final match win 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Above right: Eric Johnson credits his traveling Coach Ogidi Obi for his world ranking. Photos courtesy Allison Johnson



Santa Clara Sporting Greens (front row) Megan Wheelock, guest player Kylie Nail*, Regan Heslop*, Madi Cavanna*, Shaelan Murison, Ashley Lawrence*, (back row) Cece Hinz*, Lauren Plesse, Head Coach Jim Lawrence*, Fiona Sequeira, Lauren Craft*, Erica Nakano*, Michelle Stack, Hanna Gratny* and Christina Sola* were crowned the 2009 Clovis Challenge Cup Champions. Not photographed: Reese Gonzalez, Stephanie Magellan, and Erin McCoy*. *Almaden resident Photo Ken Nakano of Almaden Foto

Santa Clara Sporting Green wins Clovis Cup

Congratulations to the Santa Clara Sporting - Green Girl's U12 team for winning the 2009 Clovis Challenge Cup.

The girls traveled to Clovis for the third year in a row and became home champs once again. They went undefeated in their bracket taking on some of Central California's best teams, beating local favorites, Bullard FC 4 - 0 and California Odyssey 6 - 0 to advance to the semifinals against a tough SVU team. The Sporting girls prevailed and advanced to the finals with a 3 - 0 shutout.

In the finals the Sporting girls met up with the fifth ranked team in Nor Cal, the EDYSL Konfusion. The Sporting girls got out to an early lead and never looked back. The match ended in a 6 - 0 Sporting win and the girls were crowned the 2009 Clovis Challenge Cup Champions.

Pioneer JV's defeat Leigh

The Pioneer JV football team ran its record to 7-0 with a 44-8 victory over the Longhorns from Leigh High School this past Friday afternoon. Curtis Tanquary tallied five touchdowns for the Mustangs scoring on runs of 65, 14 and 5 yards and on pass receptions of 61 and 9 yards from Quarterback Zeno Forbes. Kyle Hanley scored the final touchdown for the Mustangs on a 6-yard fourth quarter run. The Mustangs rolled up more than 300 yards and were lead by offensive lineman Ron Gezzi and Steven Montesano. Sean Nelson lead the Pioneer defense with 2 interceptions, Michael Simonini and Ron Sparks recorded 6 tackles apiece. Pioneer hosts the 3-1 Saints from Santa Theresa this Friday at 4:30 p.m.