

CROSSCOUNTRY

Team bonds fuel runners to finish line, personal best times

By Jocelyn Urbina

After the last race of the Cross Country season on Nov. 5, after the coaches honored each senior individually with the ceremonial presentation of orange roses, the freshmen started a new tradition. Not roses, not balloons, but golf balls!

Angel Fernandez and Gerardo Santana pulled out seven golf balls that they had collected from Cooley Landing and the Baylands, where the team runs practices and where golf balls turn up on paths and bushes having gone astray from the Palo Alto Golf Course.

With a season of experience behind them, many runners in the final WBAL Cross Country meet at the Crystal Springs Race Course that Friday came to the race less antsy, and set personal records.

The WBAL Finals race also determined which varsity runners could qualify for CCS -- anyone who ran the 2.95 mile course in under 19 minutes qualified. This year, senior David Martinez, who had qualified for CCS three times in the past, again met the mark with a personal record of 18'11", or about six minutes a mile.

The Cross Country team raced into October with two league meets, one at Crystal Springs on Oct. 6 and the other at Baylands Park in Sunnyvale on Oct. 22. With 15 days between the meets, the Sunnyvale meet demonstrated the team's improvement as a whole, after the many challenging practices and runs they had completed to prepare.

"We had more time to reflect on what we did good or bad in our last race and fix that and improve our fitness level," said junior Alondra Lopez.

The first league meet in Crystal Springs started with a 2.95 mile run over a bumpy and hilly course. Although the weather was perfect for the difficult race course -- cloudy,



PHOTO BY DIANA GOMEZ

Eastside boys hustle in the Varsity Boys Race at the Baylands Park meet in Sunnyvale on Oct. 21.

with a bit of wind but no sun -- racers faced roadblocks. Just after they had conquered a big hill at the first mile, the second mile hit them with an uphill battle at "Cardiac Hill", notorious for slowing down runners with its steep incline midway through the race.

Jasmine Kelly-Pierce, Humanities teacher and Cross Country coach, attended the race as a spectator, coach and fan who cheered the runners on the whole way through. It was her first race since the pandemic, and it reminded her of why she enjoys the sport so much.

"I find it emotional, considering how it feels like it's the kind of sport where anyone can do it, and it's also really hard," she said. "I think the coolest, best people do it, so I just get really inspired by all the people around."

Jasmine also highlighted the immense support she saw among the runners during the race. Since the races were spread out by time and groups, racers who weren't running could rest in a tent or become spectators, and

the Eastsiders all stayed on the sidelines, running along and cheering their teammates.

The Oct. 22 meet was also lively and full of support, with a 3.1 mile flat course that many still found challenging. Humanities teacher and Cross Country coach Cal Tremabth said that many runners tend to want to go fast during their first mile of that race and then slow down along the way, so consistency and control played a big role.

Senior Ricardo Enriquez Mancia, who demonstrated a 30-second improvement in the Baylands race compared with his Crystal Springs time, said he had expected the Baylands meet to be easier than the previous meet because of the different topography.

"That wasn't the case," Ricardo said. "Honestly, it feels like in the last race, I had more excuses about why I was going too slow going down because of the hills, and I was more familiar with it because that was my third time doing that race."

SPORTSBRIEFS

Soccer & basketball hold tryouts, start practices

By Betsabeth Cacho-Lopez

As fall sports seasons wrapped up, the winter teams began forming and starting practice.

Soccer is resuming this year with the girls varsity team practicing during 5th and 6th period at the soccer field. Tryouts were held Monday Nov. 1 to Friday Nov. 12. About 16 girls attended the first day of tryouts. The team consists of returning players as well as new players. The first soccer game is scheduled for Dec. 1 at Nueva.

Boys soccer also resumed this year with practices being held during 9th and 10th period at Rich May Memorial Park. The team is large this year, with about 25 players, both new and returning. Their first game will be held on Dec. 4 at Homestead Christmas Cup.

Basketball is also proceeding this year, the boys team consists of 13 members and they have already started practice during 9th and 10th period. Their first game will be on Nov. 18 at home against Oceana.

The girls basketball team held tryouts on Nov. 1 in the gym and seven girls showed up to try out. The girls basketball team will hold daily practices from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, ahead of their first game at Pacific Bay on Nov. 23.



PHOTO BY STEPHANIE XILOJ

Senior Jovanna Carter jumps to block a hit from opposing team Castilleja during the Senior Night game on Oct. 14 at home.

GIRLSVOLLEYBALL

Spirit shines as team ends in-person season

By Stephanie Xiloj

The last home games of the girls volleyball season on Oct. 14 against Castilleja ended as a heartbreaker with junior varsity and varsity losses, but the teams and fans kept their spirits up as the girls demonstrated great team spirit.

After the JV team lost two out of three sets 17-25 and 5-25, the Varsity team celebrated senior night, honoring six players. Seniors Ashley Barriga, Jovanna (Jojo) Carter, Guadalupe (Lupita) Diaz, Luisa Soto and Ashley Vargas, and junior Yesenia Machorro lined up and individually handed flowers to their loved ones. After the ceremony, the fans lined up to create the traditional bridge that the volleyball players ran under to the sound of cheers.

"I will really miss the seniors," said Coach Ali Karver.

During the first set of varsity games, Castilleja led by 17 points when Eastside scored its first point and the fans erupted in cheers. Despite the gap, the girls continued the game laughing and motivating each other. Ultimately, they lost the first set with a score of 3-25.

The second set started off with Ashley Barriga serving. Varsity scored a streak of five points

before Castilleja scored its first point. At 7-7, Castilleja moved on to take the lead. With one point left for Castilleja to win the set, the Lady Panthers seemed tired yet serious, as they communicated actively with each other. The girls paid close attention to Castilleja as they set up to serve. The ball traveled around the court longer than any other ball in the game, as neither team was giving in. Eastside scored its 17th point and the crowd roared in triumph.

"The second set was really good, it was a lot closer," said senior Nazereth Perez, of the final 17-25 score. "It had me hopeful for the third set."

Having lost the second set by only eight points, the girls huddled, eager and determined for the next set. Despite Castilleja holding the lead, the girls maintained their positive demeanor. From the sidelines, Co-captain Jojo and Coach Ali pushed and directed the girls. The crowd chanted in encouragement in hopes of turning the tides, but the last set ended as the first had, 3-25.

"Jojo killed it!" said sophomore Erin Robinson, a JV player. "Her hits were good."

"We improved a lot in passing and teamwork," said freshman JV player Drea Ferrer.

The season concluded with varsity and JV losses in their final matches against Kings Academy on Oct. 26.