

## NATE'S NATION

FIFA Lifts Ban on Religious Turbans

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Sports Editor

With the 2014 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup approaching in 63 days, people around the world are preparing for the event, some by approving travel plans and others by finishing building new stadiums.

Other ways in which people are preparing for the event are political, and include, well, passing laws. It may not be the most cheerful task during this buildup of excitement for the tournament, although in this case it has brought joy to thousands.

Recently, FIFA ruled to lift a ban on religious headwear issued by the Quebec Soccer Federation last April, and now permits participants to sport religious headwear in matches. The lifting of the ban took place after a 20-month trial that was used to test the safety of wearing religious headwear during a game, since some officials claimed that the headwear could cause injury if used during a match.

Several people from different nations protested the ban at first. The ban was a form of discrimination against certain religious groups, preventing them from wearing religious articles such as turbans, hijabs and kippas. Although the ban was issued as a safety precaution, and not to discriminate against any group, it still had an opposition from religious soccer players who were unable to wear the ar-

ticles. The headwear is part of the players' practiced religion; taking away the right for them to use it is preventing them from practicing religion.

As a practicing Catholic, this ban on religious headwear would be put on the same level as, say, a ban on me being able to wear a cross during a sporting event. During a finals track race, I was nearly disqualified and stripped of my medal for wearing a rosary pendant around my neck during the race. The race official told me it apparently had the capability to harm somebody. However, I protested with the right to wear it for religious purposes, and for him to tell me to remove it would be a form of discrimination, preventing me from practicing my religion.

If I am able to wear religious articles in my sporting events, any other person around the world should be able to too. For this matter, I am very happy that FIFA ruled in favor of letting people freely wear the turbans, hijabs and kippas while they play the sport they love. The FIFA World Cup is an event shared throughout the world that symbolizes friendly competition and unity among nations, and participants should be able to freely wear their religious articles to have pride in their culture. It truly diversifies the tournament, showcasing talent from all over the world in their own unique ways.

## Varsity Softball Ends Preseason Victoriously



MOOR photo by YIBEI LIU

**PREPARING FOR RELEASE** AHS girls' softball starting pitcher Natalie Joyce slouches down in position to gain momentum for a powerful pitch.

KAYIU WONG  
Staff Writer

During their last scrimmage of the season on April 5, the varsity softball team's solid defensive plays and fast scoring runs were key elements in their defeat against the Flintridge Prep Rebels. The team defeated the Rebels 9-0, ending their preseason with a record of 4-5.

Beginning the game offensively, the Lady Moors scored an exciting four runs in just five minutes during the top of the first inning. Junior pitcher Francine Mejia then dexterously struck out two Rebel batters, starting the match with an action-packed pace.

Proceeding into the second inning, the team received three

easy plays, using their fortified defense in obtaining consecutive outs. The Moors then stole second and home base during the third inning, adding on to their already advancing lead. By the bottom of the fourth inning, the Rebels still had yet to score.

After a batting order lineup change in the sixth inning, the Moors scored their last two runs of the game. The crowd grew anxious and excited as all bases were loaded by Flintridge during the seventh inning. This became their final opportunity to score. However, after skillfully striking out the last Rebel batter, the Moors secured their victory and ended the game with a triumphant score of 9-0.

"We really have been com-

ing together as an unit lately and [while going against Flintridge] we definitely performed well in sticking together as a team to win," captain Dezarae Murray said.

After an overall record of 4-5, this season's scrimmages have helped the team finalize both their offensive and defensive lineups. According to Murray, daily practices consist of stretching, playing catch, working inside the batting cages and passing the ball from base to base. These group exercises allow the girls to hone their skills in terms of fielding, throwing, batting, and most importantly, teamwork.

"During practice, [we] mostly focus on our weaknesses from previous games so that we can improve for the next one. Everyone this season has a strong mentality in working together and using our love for the sport to win league and move on to CIF," freshman Destiny Alegria said.

One setback the season has brought so far was losing seniors from last year who initially carried the team. Currently with five freshmen playing for varsity this season, this team consists of more underclassmen than the past years'.

Right after the match against Flintridge Prep, the team began their Almont League matches on April 8, with an away match against the Schurr Spartans. The Lady Moors lost the conference game against Schurr 11-6.

Regardless, the Lady Moors are hopeful in coming out triumphantly in Almont League rankings. The team aims to use their infielding skills, bond and momentum from the recent preseason to place higher than third place, their rank last season.

## Varsity Boys' Tennis Optimistic for Approaching Games

KEVIN KONG  
Sports Editor

Ending the regular season last year with a losing record, the varsity boys' tennis team looks forward to upcoming league matches. Despite having a relatively small team of six returners and five members bumped up from the JV team, the Moors have captured a total of three wins, making their preseason record 3-7. The team recently lost its first two Almont League games, but continues to train in preparation for future competitions.

"We are still not as experienced as we should be because a lot of us haven't played more than one year of varsity. [However], we are not stopping our improvement [and] we are getting more consistent," junior doubles Jonathan Ngo said.

Throughout the summer, the Moors practiced routinely to learn the fundamentals of the

game of tennis. According to Head Coach Tom Jelsma, the team now practices in a different way, focusing on actual game play rather than on basic drills and technique. Each day,



**A CLOSE MATCH** During AHS varsity boys' tennis April 1 match, number one singles player Arie Quintanilla went into a tiebreaker match during his game, but ended with a defeating score of 6-7.

the team takes to the courts, warms up, works on individual drills and spends the remainder of the practice playing live-ball

situations. Furthermore, the team also utilized the preseason by playing against a variety of teams to acquire new skills and solidify the singles and doubles lineup for future matches.

The team, though operating without a captain, still practices meticulously to progress in terms of both Almont League rankings and experience.

"I consider everybody a captain because I don't like to single out one person. Everyone should be a leader in their own right. It's tough because tennis is an individual sport and a team sport. By winning for yourself, you can win for the team," Jelsma said.

As the team continues through the spring season, they anticipate big matches coming up against the Schurr Spartans, Montebello Oilers and San Gabriel Matadors.

MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA

## Baseball Becoming Strong Contenders

SIMEON LAM  
Staff Writer

As the Moors varsity baseball squad gains more wins every week, the JV baseball team is quietly doing the same. The JV squad has not only won eight of its nine games, but are also 3-1

in league so far, including a 15-1 blowout against the San Gabriel Matadors on April 1.

"One of our best assets is that we don't give up," Head Coach Eric Felix said. "We have had a couple comeback victories this season due to the leadership and the energy we have on the team."

A typical day of practice is based on repetition. They go over a lot of the same routines during the week such as batting practice, fielding ground balls and designed plays so that the guys will remember where to be during the game. They also practice

strategically to prepare them to execute properly in the game.

"We have been practicing every day, communicating on the field and working hard to bring out every player strength," sophomore outfielder Justin Cruz said.

Felix believes that the key to success was the offseason training

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-Justin Cruz

that began in September. The amount of time the coaching staff and players put is the reason for their success.

"The first few months of practice, my [team] had trouble practicing and playing as a team," Felix said. "We had a team meeting and ever since, my team has created a strong brotherhood and gained the confidence that they needed to overcome any obstacles."

The Moors have their next league game against Montebello on April 22.

MOOR graphic by SIMON ZHAO