

Girls' Basketball Rebounds After Previous Season



MOOR photo by SARA HERNANDEZ

Moors vs. Aztecs Varsity Girls' Basketball battles against defending League Champions, Mark Keppel. Senior point guard Kiyomi Takemoto approaches the line in for a free throw attempt.

KEVIN KONG
Sports Editor

Just a year later from an 0-10 record and last place rank in Almont League, the varsity girls' basketball team hits the courts

once again in hopes of making strides through the rankings. The team concluded their preseason in early January with a total of 6 preseason wins. The girls began this season with losses against the San Gabriel Matadors and

the defending league champions, the Mark Keppel Aztecs, as well as a win against the Bell Garden Lancers to improve to 1-2. "The difference between this team and last year's is that we all understand the impor-

tance of being a team and we work well together [...] to play smart," captain Justina Sam said.

Third-year Head Coach Erik Williams has the Lady Moors practicing daily in order to prepare for the competition that awaits. According to Sam, a basic practice session includes stretching warm ups followed by drills that emphasize dribbling, passing, shooting and defensive fundamentals. The team also goes over plays in order to refine them for real games.

"I believe we have improved on our ability to work harder on the court," senior point guard Kiyomi Takemoto said, "[and] a big strength of the team this year is that we definitely have potential when we are able to work [...] together. We can muster up enough confidence to set the tone of [each] game."

Improvements of the team also include their ability to play aggressively and as a unit, which several players have noted affected their performance on the court. Unlike the previous year, the team has a greater mixture of athletes

from multiple grades with a total of six seniors and seven underclassmen. In turn, this allows the team to have a solid foundation for next year in terms of both skill and leadership. According to senior shooting guard Crystal Ho, the girls are being led as a more defensively minded team as opposed to offensively minded, but still is able to maintain a mix of players that have different abilities. As for the goals of the Lady Moors, they hope to qualify for the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Preliminaries, address areas of weakness in order to improve their current record and expand on a solid foundation for next year's team. The girls will continue throughout season with new changes and essentially new missions.

"Our team has talent and athletic ability, but our mental alertness and ability to play strategically falls short often. Strategy is not something a team can change overnight, or even game to game, so it would all depend on the willingness of the team if we want change," Ho said.

Wrestling Pins Their Way Down to League Finals

WILLIAM RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

With the 2015 Almont League Wrestling Finals approaching, the JV wrestling team is leaning toward ending their season on a positive note. As of Jan. 14, the Moors hold a 3-1 record and a first place ranking amongst the six teams in the Almont League.

"The [key to our success] is the growing brotherhood that we all have," sophomore Chris Aldana said, "Even though some guys [are stronger] than others in different areas, we all help one another so we can all improve and not leave anyone behind."

According to Head Coach Michael Williams, this team is much smaller than other schools', consisting of only 17 wrestlers, but this tight group has made the team more united and has made it easier for each player to

keep focused on their individual strengths and weaknesses. However, Williams and captain Eric Gonzalez both agree that having a small group gives the team a disadvantage, but Williams teaches them to stay strong mentally along with physical training.

"[Wrestling] is all mental," Williams said, "but technique and quickness beats strength [and quantity] every time."

The Moors are remaining positive as there are only a few matches left until the regular season comes to an end. After school, the team practices daily in the wrestling room starting with stretching, drills and improving on weaknesses from previous matches. The next match for the team will be on Jan. 28 against the San Gabriel Matadors followed by the 2015 Almont League Wrestling Finals on Jan. 31 at Bell Gardens High School.

Girls' Soccer Determined to Advance to CIF

BRIANA THAI
Staff Writer

Working through the varsity girls' soccer team is determined to achieve their goal of qualifying to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Preliminaries and getting past the third round. Last year, the girls were undefeated league champions and qualified for CIF.

Preseason consisted of eight games and one tournament. The games resulted in four wins, three losses and one tie. The tournament resulted in one victory and two defeats. The girls qualified to the quarter-finals of the silver division.

"I feel that [the team] had taken complete advantage of preseason and used it to practice and refine our game," ju-

The girls practice four days a week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for two to three hours at Moor Field. They



MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA
WORKING IT OUT Sophomore Alexis Duenas (left center) and Junior Casey Moore (right center) go side-by-side during Varsity Girls' Soccer practice. Currently the team is working towards qualifying for CIF.

nior defensive player Vivyana Prado said, "but we can improve more by practicing plays and consistently attending practice."

run, practice passes and ball control and focus on defensive and offensive plays. When scrimmaging they emphasize understanding, teamwork and communication skills, with the help of their new head coach, Nabor Solis.

"There have been a couple of bumps in the road here and there with adjusting to coach [Solis] but we have overcome them and grown stronger as a family," junior Christine Gomez said.

Although the Lady Moors won their first league game against the Mark Keppel Aztecs 5-1, they lost their second game against Schurr 1-3. Their next game is on Tues, Jan. 20, against Montebello at Moor Field.

WHICH COACHING STYLE IS MORE EFFECTIVE FOR ATHLETES?

SIMEON LAM
Sports Editor

LAID BACK

WESLEY TSAI
Staff Writer

AUTHORITATIVE

While sports are the true event that athletes play for, the coaching style makes a monumental difference in making a sport fun and enjoyable, yet competitive and challenging. Each coach has a unique style of coaching that players notice. But which one is the most effective to these athletes? Weighing the pros and the cons, a laid back coaching style seems to benefit athletes the most. A laid back coaching style allows athletes to have a friendlier connection with the coach and to experience less pressure while performing and practicing. The trust that can be built allows a better way of teaching and providing insight in preparation for games.

Some may say a more aggressive coach would push a player harder and motivate them. However, according to USA Today, a study of athletes at Rutgers University has shown that athletes react negatively to aggressive coaches and are less motivated. Players also question the credibility of the coach because of this style. All in all, laid back coaching styles creates a comfortable environment for athletes not only to enjoy the sport they love but also to improve their skills in a positive manner. In my personal experience, a laid back coaching style definitely helps my confidence and performance because the sport becomes fun instead of stressful.

In the world of sports, coaches have a large role in the success of an athlete. However, there are two types of approaches by which coaches teach. As we find the strengths and weaknesses of the two options, we have on this side, the authoritative coach. While many find the laid back coach to be more successful, the strict coach has a better outcome on the players.

In the long run, a strict coach teaches discipline, hard work and determination while the easygoing coach provides lessons that teach the athletes to do whatever they want.

Strict coaches also build character. Although sports in high school are meant to be fun, the skills learned can also be applied to real life situations. Like a coach, a manager will most likely not freely give away a promotion; rather, an employee must work hard to earn it. According to Kids and Sports, it has been reported that lenient coaches do not push their athletes hard enough to the point where the athlete begs to be pushed more during practices or games. Overall, many different types of coaches have had success with both strategies, but the stricter coach seems to have a better impact on teams.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN

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