

Varsity Boys' Basketball Hoping to Silence Doubtful Rumors



MOOR photo by STEWART RYDMAN-ESPINOSA

BACK OFF In a Nov. 26 scrimmage against Downey, power forward Edward Liu fends off an aggressive defender to set up an easy lay-up for a teammate. This game kicked off the season for the varsity boys' basketball team.

JIMMY TANG
Staff Writer

As another season comes around, the Alhambra varsity basketball team will be tackling many negative rumors regarding their skills and the likelihood that this year's players will perform below par.

"Everyone is assuming that we will place last this year and we want to make them eat their words," said Co-Captain Chucky Wu.

In order to prepare for the tough season ahead of them, the team has been practicing since the previous season ended. However, many concerns have arisen over this long period, which may have an effect on the team's performance in the Almont League.

"Considering the fact that we have an extensive lineup of under-

classmen this coming season, my only worry is our lack of experience and chemistry as a team," said point guard Micah Dicena.

The team has gone the extra mile

"My only worry is our lack of experience and chemistry as a team."

– Micah Dicena

to change their strategies in order to accommodate the smaller amount of players. These changes include spending more time with exercises, such as running, to help the players' endurance and conditioning in order to improve their physical strength. The team is also working hard to make sure that each player is mentally prepared throughout the season

in order to think clearly when they are on the court.

"These changes will greatly impact [our performance] and allow us to pace our way towards a successful season," said Dicena.

Although there are many obstacles for the team to overcome, the team is still trying their best. This was evident during their game against El Monte where they celebrated a win with a score of 61-36.

The team approached this game with a new strategy in order to take their opponents by surprise. They integrated an eight-man rotation strategy which allowed the more experienced players to cover for the players who were struggling.

"I am not surprised with the win because of our intense performance," said Wu.

Water Polo Builds Foundational Skills to Prepare for League

SIDNEY AUNG
Staff Writer

The varsity girls' water polo team is demonstrating their commitment towards having a productive season. Their upcoming Almont League season requires that they take extra measures to play more proficiently.

In order to prepare themselves, they are starting practice significantly earlier than the start of season. This gives new players the opportunity to get comfortable with the sport before having to play against other teams.

The team consists of a large group of returning players who feel that the team is headed in the right direction in terms of skill level, but can still make plenty of improvements. These returners are enthusiastic about having a successful season and are more than willing to share their wisdom with the incoming players.

"With all of the returning players and the high level of experience this team has, it is important that we are not dependent on one or two leaders of the team. I want many returning players to become leaders of

this team and set a positive example for everyone to follow," said Head Coach Sarah Duran.

The coaches are trying to teach foundational skills to instill confidence in the Lady Moors and the current focus of practice is improving their defense and gradually developing a stronger level of conditioning. With a strong defensive mindset, the Moors are hoping to optimize on steals and create offense from their opponents' mistakes. Stamina will undeniably be a key factor for success and the team is striving to give a tremendous effort during practices.

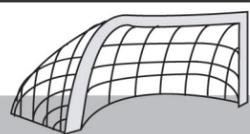
"It doesn't matter how good we're playing if we get tired and lose our focus. If we aren't tired, then we won't make careless mistakes for other teams to take advantage of," said wing Nikki Nguyen.

In order to reach their goals, the team needs to achieve a higher level of unity. With many practices already passed by, the team is establishing a unique bond with one another. Ultimately, the team is headed in a positive direction and is determined to be a dominant force in league.



MOOR photo by KATHRYN CHU

FRIENDLY FACEOFF After the girls' water polo game against Milken Community was delayed on Dec. 2, defensive set Nita Durazo aims for a steal from set Kristen Moore during a varsity vs. JV scrimmage.



Varsity Briefs

ANGELYNE CHU
Sports Editor

Returning Coach Prompts Lady Moors to Improve

For the past four years, the varsity girls' soccer team has had a new coach every season. This year, however, Head Coach Armando Gutierrez has returned for his second year with the Lady Moors. His return has affected the girls positively because they have had no consecutive coaches for a period of time.

According to Captain Courtney Moore, in previous years, the team's coaches had left them because they

had given up on the girls. The coach is the main part of the team; he is the glue that keeps them together. Working with Gutierrez for the second year is helpful because he gives the girls a stable environment.

"Instead of trying to learn the new coach's way of training, we learn the same coach's style of practice from last year. We know what his expectations for us are and what he wants us to do," said Moore.

On the other hand, although the girls have a returning coach, they still have one problem that is inhibiting their rapid progress: teamwork. According to Moore, every player

is capable individually, but not as a team. Each player must work with everyone, not only with close friends.

"We should get to know each other during and outside school so that we can feel more comfortable around the each other," said forward Debbie Banuelos.

According to Gutierrez, his goals this year are to definitely do better than last year and to make the girls more competitive.

"We have a good, solid team this year. The challenge is to come together as one, but this team can pass this obstacle," said Gutierrez.

forward Dagmawi Tilaye believes in the team's freshmen and sophomores, as three-quarters of them took part in soccer clubs and academies before high school.

Their young ages do not discourage Bravo either from pushing everyone to perform better than what the rest of the school might see as a "rag tag group of kids." He emphasizes speed and agility in practices rather than power to make up for their small stature, relying on fast plays and 3-step maneuvers to out-run their opponents.

So far, the team is 0-0-2 in the pre-season. San Marino ended in a 0-0

tie, and Flintridge Prep also ended in a tie with a 1-1 score. The Rosemead game resulted in a 0-2 loss, but these games are only a realization of the competition the players are to face in the coming season.

Bravo, in addition to being an athletic coach, stresses the value of academic performance amongst his members. Players must sign an athlete's contract and attend regular study halls to maintain their grades, as well as their skills. With the pre-season almost done, he does not want any excuses to perform less than what the team can achieve in the future.

Varsity Team Wrestles to Stay on Top of Competition

JAMES HO
Copy Editor

At AHS, the wrestling team is a program associated with pride and potential. Last year, the team took third place in the Almont League and also competed in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) championships. Their goal is to repeat that sequence this season, as well as prepare the team for future competitions.

"I'm hoping to win League and for the team to be competitive at CIF."

– Richard Poun

Comprised of many returning members, this year's lineup is both an experienced and ambitious group of wrestlers. Among them are 14 varsity members whose jobs are to train the numerous younger members of the team.

The first week of preseason practice is one of the most grueling experiences the team undergoes throughout the year. In order to condition the incoming wrestlers, the first

week is dedicated to intense practice sessions where new members learn techniques from returning wrestlers while shaping up their physicality for the impending matches.

Contrary to popular belief, the wrestling team actually practices all year long. The varsity members

attended summer camp as a pre-emptive practice opportunity; now the all-important league season, as well as the exhausting

practice routine, has begun. "Personally, I'm hoping to win league for my senior year and for the team to be competitive at CIF," said varsity member Richard Poun.

Among the rivals in Almont League, the Schurr Spartans are the target for the Moors, who are hoping to defeat them at each match in the season. The first tournament the team competed in was at Gabrielino High on Dec. 10.