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Acalanes claims NCS D2 boy's soccer title **By Karl Buscheck**



Mason Larrick (20) and Brody Quinn (14)

n the path to securing the tis added. North Coast Section Division 2 boys' soccer championship, ing along Acalanes' stingy back-Acalanes didn't let in multiple line. At the heart of the defense was fuel for our boys (after) having goals in any of the team's final 13 games. In the playoff finals on Feb. 25 in Lafayette, the Dons didn't ing defensive player on our team, allow any goals at all, outlasting Montgomery, 1-0, in double overtime.

Preps ranked as the No. 43 team defensive unit." in the state, capped their 20-2-4 campaign (9-1 in league) with the ham was another indispensable title-game shutout, head coach Paul Curtis offered a simple message to his squad.

"I always tell them congratulations on the win," Curtis said. "And fense allowed two goals," Curtis then I think the key factor was how proud the other coaches and I were of them that they were able to maximize their potential and show tre- the postseason, as the team permitmendous resolve."

Against the No. 5 seed Montgomery, the second-seeded Dons delivered the decisive goal in the the title game)," Curtis said. "In second-to-last minute of double fact, each batch of the playoffs he overtime courtesy of Gabe Singer, made several big saves (on) closewho found the back of the net for in shoots that are goals unless he

The senior striker was playing adds to the excitement of it." as part of a injury-depleted starting

for them.

"The other strength was the

Two of those fill-ins were startcenter back Chris Rogers.

"Chris was the most outstandas selected by his teammates," Curtis explained. "He's just a sophomore, made first-team all-league After the Dons, who Max- and was a huge part of that whole

Junior goalkeeper Luke Denmember of the group. During the regular season, Denham and the defense were all but impenetrable.

In league play this year, the desaid. That's it. Just two. I've never seen anything like it."

That success spilled over into ted only a couple of goals against its four NCS opponents.

"He made several big saves (in the fifth time in four playoff games. plays spectacularly. So, that just

While the Dons dispatched 11 that featured four Dons reserves. Casa Grande 4-1 in the open-"This team was unique in that ing round, the road to becoming they pulled together as a unit per- NCS champs was not an easy one. haps as well or better than any team Acalanes toppled Campolindo 1-0 that I've coached," Curtis said. in the quarterfinals before edging "And that became a real strength the No. 3 seed Richmond 2-1 - in double overtime – in the semifinals.

remaining calm and executing in pressure-packed moments.

Photos Gint Federas

"I think that just added more gone through a very close Campolindo match and then really surviving a double overtime (game against Richmond)," Curtis said. "They had more experience in tight situations than the other team did and I think that paid off at the end as well - helping them be calm in the face of a very hectic last match."

For the Cougars, the semifinals exit brought an end to the team's 11-10-4 season (3-4-3). Campolindo had entered the NCS Division 2 bracket as the No. 7 seed. Miramonte, who grabbed the No. 12 seed in the Division 3 competition, lost out in the quarterfinals to No.4 Bishop O'Dowd. The Mats wrapped up the season 10-10-2 (5-4-1 in league).

Play Ball!



Photo Shirley DeFrancisci, DeF-Stop Photography (www.defstop.net) On Saturday Feb. 25, the Moraga Baseball Association celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a festive hometown parade and ceremony. The event featured over 200 players and coaches, members from the original 1977 Board, Campolindo cheer, Boy Scout Troop 212 color guard, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate school band, and Moraga police and fire departments. The master of ceremonies was Oakland A's announcer Dick Callahan, a long-time local resident. Visit moragabaseball.org to learn more about MBA



Mustang10U Royal Knights players Gabe Savala and Niklas Lindberg walk into the Photo provided

The Orinda Baseball Association (OBA) celebrates its 33rd season of community baseball, with Opening Day on Feb. 25. OBA has over 340 players participating this season, spread out over four divisions, with kids ages 7 to 14. OBA has a strong tradition in Orinda for a meaningful baseball experience, striving for a balance between sportsmanship, skill development, competition and having fun. Games are on weekends at Del Rey, Wagner Ranch and Orinda Sportsfield; casual baseball fans are always welcome.

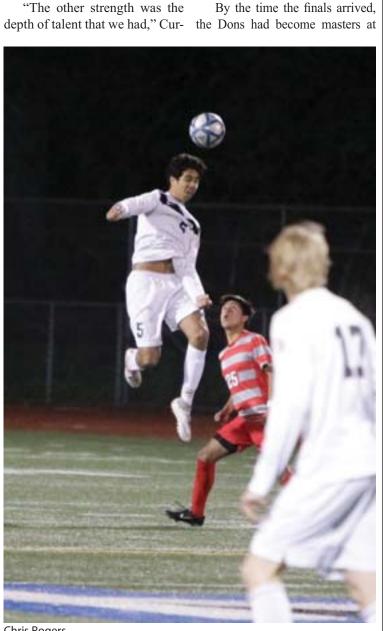


From left: Spring Hill student and Yankee player Kyle Woodson with Stanley student and Indians team member Nikko Woodson. Photo A. Scheck

Lafayette Little League opening day on March 4 fell short because of the rain.

Despite the rain Kyle and Nikko Woodson of Lafayette practiced together.





Chris Rogers

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- Summer Swim Team begins May 2 (early registration discounts)

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