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The Star's All County First Team Girls Soccer bios

Monday, March 24, 2008

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Alyson Birgel, Thousand Oaks, Center Midfield



One of the area's brightest young talents, Birgel controlled the midfield and acted as playmaker for a Thousand Oaks team that won the program's first CIF-Southern Section crown. The 5-foot-10, 135-pounder tallied eight goals and six assists and handled the majority of free kicks for the Lancers. At season's end, she was a first-team choice for the All-Marmonte League team Division II Offensive Player of the Year. Birgel, whose top hobbies are hanging out with friends and heading to the beach, is also a member of the Olympic Development Program.

THE STAR'S FIRST TEAM

Kalani Bertsch, St. Bonaventure, Goalkeeper



The Tri-Valley League's Defensive Player of the Year allowed just 12 goals all season while notching nine shutouts. With her in the net, the Seraphs placed second in the competitive Tri-Valley League and reached the second round of the CIF-Southern Section Division V playoffs. Bertsch, whose hobbies include dirt biking, snowboarding and tennis, serves as a volunteer at Citrus Glen sports editor of the school newspaper. She is undecided on a college choice.



Laura Brain, Thousand Oaks, Goalkeeper

Teams don't have championship seasons without a top-notch goalkeeper. Brain, the three-time Goalkeeper of the Year in the Marmonte League, fits that description. In playing 1,515 minutes, she allowed a mere 10 goals for an average of 0.59 goals per game. She posted 13 shutouts this year, including consecutive shutouts in the Southern California Regional Tournament. Brain, who can be found at the gym, beach or movies when she is not playing soccer, will play in college at California Lutheran.



Kristin Cameron, Royal, Forward/midfield

The top-notch scorer collected seven goals and 10 assists as the Highlanders' leading scorer. For the second year in a row, she was named to the first unit of the All-Marmonte League team. Cameron, who lists dirt-bike riding and snowboarding as her favorite hobbies, is also a scholar-athlete award winner. The 5-foot-6, 115-pounder, who says the Boston Red Sox are her favorite team, intends to play collegiately at San Diego State.



Nicole Cruz, Thousand Oaks, Sweeper

The Lancers' standout sweeper played a crucial role in the program's CIF-Southern Section Division II title and a run to the Southern California Regional final. Not only did Cruz anchor the defense, she proved a steady hand on offense with three goals and seven assists. Included was two key assists in the Lancers' second-round victory over Laguna Hills. Cruz, who favors snowboarding, hanging out with friends and soccer on the beach as her top diversions, next will play at Cal State Northridge. She was honored as the Division II Defensive Player of the Year and was a first-team All-Marmonte League choice.



Kendall Dreyer, Agoura, Forward

With the Chargers registering their most successful season since joining the Marmonte League, Dreyer led the way as the team's leading scorer. Agoura followed its second-place finish in the Marmonte League by advancing to the semifinals in the CIF-Southern Section Division II playoffs. Dreyer, who favors snowboarding and wakeboarding as her top hobbies, was selected as the Marmonte League's Offensive Player of the Year. A member of the school's honor roll as well as a scholar-athlete, she will attend UC Santa Barbara or Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.



Sidney Garza, Buena, Center Midfield

As the Bulldogs won their 16th consecutive Channel League championship, the team leader was Garza. The 5-foot-4, 135-pound senior deftly controlled the action at midfield and also notched seven goals and nine assists. Buena reached the quarterfinals in the CIF-Southern Section Division I playoffs before losing to eventual co-champion Long Beach Wilson. Garza, a longtime

member of the Camarillo Eagles club team, was named the Channel League's MVP on offense. She favors family, friends, church and soccer, and will attend St. Mary's College.



Kelly Johnson, Oaks Christian, Center Midfield

Merely a sophomore, Johnson played a large part in the Lions' first outright CIF-Southern Section Division V championship. She emerged as the team playmaker, racking up a team-high 15 assists to go with her 12 goals. She earned postseason laurels as a first-team member of the All-CIF-SS Division V team and a first-team choice for the All-Tri-Valley League team. She also stars in the classroom as a scholar-athlete and dean's list performer the past two years. Her favorite hobbies include going to the beach and singing in the shower.



Lauren Kawamoto, Oak Park, Forward

The junior co-captain helped the Eagles finish third in the rugged Tri-Valley League and reach the semifinals of the CIF-Southern Section Division V playoffs. The 5-foot-4, 125-pounder was the team leader in goals with 13 and assists with nine, and was honored as a first-team member of the All-Tri-Valley League squad. The versatile athlete also competes in track and field, and sports a 3.9 grade-point average in the classroom. She is a member of the Olympic Development Program.



Kaitlin Paletta, Moorpark, Defender

Among the premier defenders in the CIF-Southern Section, Paletta was at the heart of a special season for Moorpark. With the 5-foot-6, 115-pound senior manning the defensive back row, the Musketeers fashioned their finest year in school history by reaching the CIF-SS Division II championship game. Paletta earned recognition as the Marmonte League MVP and as a first-team selection to the All-CIF-SS Division II squad. The four-year honor roll student will play collegiately at UC Berkeley.



Kelsea Smith, Oaks Christian, Forward/defender

An exemplary high school career ended with her team winning its first outright CIF-Southern Section Division V title and her selection as the Division V Offensive Player of the Year. The 5-foot-8, 135-pounder was the Lions' leading scorer with 18 goals and nine assists. Smith, who will play in college at Pepperdine, is also the Tri-Valley League's Offensive Player of the Year. When she is not playing soccer, she can be found at the piano or working with the national charity league.

Yadira Toraya, Pacifica, Forward

Not only did the Tritons win their first Pacific View League championship, they advanced to the CIF-Southern Section playoffs for the first time in program history. At the forefront was Toraya. The 5-

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foot-4, 115-pound junior netted 22 goals and 13 assists as the Tritons advanced to the second round of the Division IV playoffs. She earned postseason honors as the Pacific View League's top player on offense. Toraya, whose favorite team is UCLA, said her top TV program is "Real Housewives of Orange County."

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