

# Little League opens with a bang

By Joshua Spidel  
The Malibu Times

The 2014 season of Malibu Little League kicked off under sunny skies on a beautiful Saturday morning last weekend as parents, kids and coaches took part in a vibrant opening day ceremony at Bluffs Park.

MLL President Gregg Brock said he was glad to get the season underway with hundreds of Malibu parents and kids looking on.

"It's a day these families will never forget," Brock said.

Brandt Anderson, coach of the Major Dodgers, concurred with enthusiasm.

"It's so beautiful out here (in Malibu), and it's baseball."

Tossing out the first pitch for the hardball competitions was Jonah Stern, whose twin brother plays in the Malibu Little

League Major Division. Stern recently returned from the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, where he is battling cancer and on his way to completing chemotherapy at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Stern came out on the mound with determination, throwing a strike right into the catcher's mitt.

After the first pitch, all the players were organized with their teams to be introduced. Each team recognized their coaches, team moms and team sponsors, who set up tents throughout the rest of opening day as teams played a total of 10 games on a busy opening Saturday.

There are three levels of play for both softball and baseball (AA, AAA, Majors). This gives children of different age groups the opportunity to play against same age competition.

After winning their third consecutive "Majors" championship, the Phillies look



Joshua Spidel / TMT

Ten-year-old Jonah Stern throws out the first pitch Saturday.

to defend their title along with the AAA White Sox and AA Tigers for hardball this season.

While most little league participants take part in hardball, league officials are excited this year to see an uptick in softball participation.

"Softball is growing, we went from 30 to 65 girls this year," Purtell said.

Throughout the tenure of the MLL, overall participation has fluctuated and there was a worry of the possibility of lower numbers this year. Opening day showed that was not going to be a problem. "We've been worried about losing kids but we have great numbers this year," Cruse said.

The event originally was slated for the previous Saturday, however the

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—BRANDT ANDERSON

heavy thunderstorms that inundated the Southland caused it to be postponed.

"We were patient," Brock said.

With the opening festivities out of the way, the ballplayers fanned across the field and the pings of aluminum on leath-

er rang out as more than a half-dozen games were played.

As the yearly ritual played out, several coaches spoke highly of little league's importance to community building and interaction.

"Youth sports is the community," vice president and softball commissioner Russ Purtell said.

Being a dad himself, Anderson said the league strengthens ties both within families and in Malibu overall.

"You see kids interacting with their dads and getting to know the other kids," Anderson said.

He also mentioned that the kids know each other at school because of the MLL and they come to these fields in a safe environment.

## Senior-laden MHS lacrosse aims to build on last year



Dick Dornan / TMT

Jonathan Shanley, right, maneuvers around the goal with defenseman George Savas in his sight.

By Dick Dornan  
Special to The Malibu Times

Returning 10 seniors from a squad that went 11-6 and won a berth in the U.S. Lacrosse Southern Section playoffs in 2013, coach Mark DeOliveira holds high expectations in his second year at the helm of the Malibu High School lacrosse team.

Despite graduating 12 seniors from a year ago, DeOliveira returns a strong group of talented and versatile players who will serve as the core of the team in 2014.

"I'm expecting a lot of new roles for our kids and how they develop into leaders. Losing 12 seniors from last year presents a lot of opportunities for leadership to emerge," DeOliveira said. "The 10 seniors all have game experience. It's their time to shine and I'm looking forward to that."

Malibu will rely on its defense and midfield in the early part of the season. Among last year's graduating class were several of the team's top offensive players, so the plan is for MHS to buckle down on the defensive side of the field to dictate the tone of each game.

Senior defenseman George Savas anchors the defense along with junior Elliot Quartz and senior goalkeeper Ricky Alba.

"Our defense should be pretty solid this year. We have a good goalie," Savas said. "Our offense is pretty good too but our defense is strong. It's great to be back out here again."

Forming the spine of this year's squad are five seniors in the middle of the field, where DeOliveira says there is some real talent.

"Our midfielders are good and they really know the game," he said. "They've been friends for a long time and they work together very well. We need to rely on them."

Duke Conrad, Harrison Smart and Lucas Terranova are four-year play-

ers whose experience and play-making ability will be counted upon. Kerns Churchill and Amir Mahmoud will also play key roles at the midfield position.

"We are pretty much brothers in this program trying to do our very best," said Mahmoud. "The coaches have done a great job of improving our fundamentals. They have trained us to be really good athletes."

Conrad has been one of the team's best offensive weapons for the past two years. He and fellow senior attackman Jonathan Shanley will create tough matchups for opposing teams with their quickness and agile moves around the goal.

"The last two years I've always been one of the highest point guys on the team with goals, assists and ground balls, but now I have to get some other guys to do it," Conrad said. "It's kind of up to me to help the other guys, which I really haven't done before. I'm trying the best I can. There is a lack of experience offensively so I'm giving them pointers every now and then."

Newcomers to the team include juniors Winston Churchill (Kerns' younger brother), Noah Gorelick and Ethan Kruse.

Savas, Conrad and Shanley are the team's three captains. The trio will lead the Sharks into upcoming contests against rivals Oak Park and Oaks Christian as well as tough opponents such as Harvard-Westlake, Cate and Thacher.

The Sharks began the season on the right foot with a sturdy defensive effort in a 6-5 victory on opening day last week against Brentwood.

Malibu travels to Viewpoint on Thursday and will play next at home on March 21 versus Oaks Christian at 6:30 p.m.

"This is my last year of playing lacrosse so it's bittersweet," Churchill said. "We are a heavy-senior dominated team and we will go as far as we can."

## Sharing the field

The Simi Youth Baseball Shetland American team takes the field with the Pepperdine Waves baseball team to sing the National Anthem. Children players, pictured from left: Jonathan Real, Jayden Ferguson and Christian Haupt.



## Malibu High looking for coaches

Malibu High School football is looking for qualified coaches in time for spring and summer practice. The Sharks are searching for a varsity defensive coordinator, defensive backs coach, defensive line coach, junior varsity head

coach and other staff.

All interested candidates should apply to head coach Ray Humphrey at rhumphrey@smmud.org with a personal resume and cover letter or call by phone at 310.457.6801 ext. 74242 for more information.

## Soccer semifinals



Photo by Brian Stack

The Malibu AYSO BU12 Surf Riders team was one of only 16 that qualified to play in the AYSO Section 10 All-Star Tournament that took place in Bakersfield on March 1 and 2. The first day of the tournament, the Surf Riders won its pool with three wins over teams from Valencia, Tulare and Quartz Hill. The team advanced to the semifinals as

a top seed among four teams.

The Surf Riders lost 2-1 in double-overtime against a team from Santa Barbara. In the consolation final, the team won against a team from Culter-Orsini 3-2. The Surf Riders finished the tournament in third place, ranking them as one of the top 10 BU12 all-star teams on the west coast.

Malibu AYSO BU12 Surf Riders team participates in the AYSO Section 10 All-Star Tournament. Pictured, from left, first row: Evan Gefit, Carson Baer, Bowen Brock, Daniel Gefit and Nick Reinhold; second row: Landon Amaral, Alden Silvestre, Tariq Stack, Nalu Mack, Tommy Aversa, Trumann Gettings and Mason Sainz; third row: Coaches Tim Silvestre and John Gettings

## MHS upcoming games

Thurs., March 13

Varsity golf league tournament, at Rancho San Marcos, 1 p.m.

Track and field league meet, at Santa Paula, 3 p.m.

Varsity lacrosse vs. Viewpoint, at Viewpoint, 3:15 p.m.

Varsity softball vs. Oakwood, at Oakwood, 3:15 p.m.

Varsity boys volleyball vs. Carpinteria, at home, 5 p.m.

Sat., March 15

Track and field Tri County, at Moorpark High School, 9 a.m.

JV baseball vs. Burroughs High, at home, 11 a.m./2 p.m.

Varsity Baseball vs. Burroughs High, at Burroughs High, 4 p.m./7 p.m.

Mon., March 17

Varsity softball vs. Archer, at Archer, 3:30 p.m.

Tues., March 18

Varsity golf vs. Grace Brethren, at Wood Ranch, 1 p.m.

Varsity tennis vs. Carpinteria, at Carpinteria, 3 p.m.

Varsity boys volleyball vs. Fillmore, at home, 5 p.m.

Varsity lacrosse vs. Oak Park, at Oak Park, 7:30 p.m.

Wed., March 19

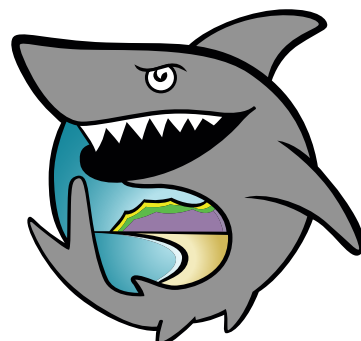
All swim vs. Santa Paula, at Santa Paula, 3 p.m.

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