

Malibu football making the most of the summer



Photos by Dick Dornan / TMT

Luca Marinaro of Malibu battles against an Agoura defensive back.



Malibu linebacker Alec Stevenson

Sharks compete in 7-on-7 passing tournaments, lift weights to prepare for the regular fall season.

By Dick Dornan
Special to The Malibu Times

Helmets? Pads? Sorry fans, not until August 30.

But summer football — sans helmets, pads and tackling — is in full swing for Malibu High. The Sharks are bolstering up for an exciting season by working out relentlessly in the weight room five days a week, practicing and competing in various passing events.

Football season begins in two months but why wait for the Friday night lights when you can play two-hand touch against tough competition from across the valley on any given day of the week?

All you need is a football, 14 players, coaches, a couple officials and you have

the making of an exciting game of 7-on-7 passing.

Last Saturday, Malibu participated in the Agoura Tournament at Agoura High School competing against Santa Barbara, Pacifica, Agoura and Newbury Park. The Sharks struggled against the stiffer competition, but nonetheless gained valuable experience.

“The progress is coming along real well,” Malibu coach Ray Humphrey said. “We have some new kids in so we are trying to develop continuity, have them play together and understand what their roles are. I am pretty pleased where we are going.”

After sustaining a tough campaign in 2013 where the team posted a winless 0-6 record, Malibu has rededicated itself to becoming stronger, quicker and faster through grueling weight room and conditioning sessions.

Typically, Malibu will practice on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from

2-5 p.m. with weight training at the beginning followed by practice on the field.

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are usually earmarked for passing round robins or tournaments with weight training and conditioning mixed in.

Ah, the life of a football player: grinding away in the hot summer weather as aches and sores pile up on a daily basis.

“The summer has been really good,” senior running back Matt Vincent said. “We have all made improvements in the weight room and on the field. All of us are extremely excited and hyped for this upcoming season.”

Malibu has already taken part in 7-on-7 round robins at Viewpoint, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks.

Winning and losing are the least of the team’s concerns though, as the Sharks focus on improving team chemistry, quarterback and wide receiver tim-

ing, and defensive pass coverage.

“It’s been good because we learn our pass coverage against better athletes, faster receivers and really strong quarterbacks,” junior linebacker Alec Stevenson said.

Vincent, senior quarterback Dylan Lubell, senior Justin Baldinger and junior Luca Marinaro return with plenty of experience on offense from last season.

Stevenson, one of the top linebackers in the area, anchors the defense along with Vincent, Baldinger and Marinaro, who will see action on both sides of the ball.

“Those guys are older and wiser but we are still young with only four or five seniors,” said Humphrey. “We are still growing but I like our nucleus.”

An infusion of newcomers that includes Westlake transfer Cooper Richman, Santa Monica transfer Indiana McAlpine and Loyola transfer Matt

Rafecdie will help out a Sharks program in need of depth. All three are juniors.

Rafecdie will add talent on the defensive side while Richman and McAlpine bring versatility to the wide receiver position.

“The aggressiveness and speed from our wide receivers will open up the middle of the field,” Humphrey said. “We have threats now which will allow us to go vertical. That’s a very big positive for us.”

Playing in 7-on-7 contests, bulking up in the weight room and practicing should benefit a program looking to turn around last season’s results. The regular season opener versus Santa Monica is just around the corner.

“We have put last year behind us and are trying now to get stronger and faster and be in shape for the season,” said Stevenson. “We will be ready.”

Next up for MHS is the Rio Mesa Tournament on July 12.

Watkin joins LA Galaxy youth soccer academy

Malibu High senior begins training at the elite level with LA Galaxy youth camp.

By Dick Dornan
Special to The Malibu Times

Goalkeeper Max Watkin walked across the field as he has done so many times in his young soccer career, but it wasn’t the soccer field he was used to.

For the next 45 minutes, Watkin made his dream come true playing at the StubHub Center in Carson, Calif.,

home of Major League Soccer’s Los Angeles Galaxy.

His opponent? The LA Galaxy alumni team with notable players such as Cobi Jones, Alexi Lalas and Mauricio Cienfuegos. With his team trailing 2-1 at halftime, Watkin was inserted into the game and made his way to the goal box where he took in the atmosphere, the fans, the opponent and the once-in-a-lifetime moment.

Watkin, a 17-year-old Malibu High senior, represented the LA Galaxy Under-18 Academy team in a friendly match on May 25 and demonstrated

why he was invited to be a part of the LA Galaxy youth academy program. Watkin made several saves and did not allow a goal in the 2-1 loss.

As the final whistle blew to end the contest, Watkin walked off the field with his head high, realizing what a special moment he had experienced.

“If you asked me if I was going to do that a year ago, I would have never been able to imagine that,” Watkin said. “Being able to play in a stadium on a field that I’ve watched so many times was a great opportunity and a great memory for me.”

Watkin played a major role in Malibu’s success this past season as the Sharks won a league title for the first time since 2008. At the conclusion of the season, Watkin was invited to be a part of the prestigious LA Galaxy youth academy and has been playing for the Galaxy U-16 and U-18 developmental teams since March.

“I was so relieved that all the hard work and training actually paid off,” he said. “It’s a great feeling to be on such great teams.”

He has been training with both teams Monday through Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m.

Watkin credits Galaxy U-16 head coach Michael Munoz, goalkeeper coach Ruben Messina and Malibu coach Julian Wright for his growth as a player.

“I have developed a lot as a player being able to play with the great players on the academy team. Being able to train with such amazing coaches has really helped me too,” Watkin said. “I have improved a lot. It’s been a growing experience for me. It’s been humbling as well, being around all these great people.”

Watkin has played with and against some of the most talented and respected players and teams in the world.

He traveled with the Galaxy U-18 to the Dallas Cup, the most celebrated youth tournament in the world, and competed at the Cotton Bowl in the ‘Super Group,’ the highest division of the Dallas Cup.

Watkin also participated in Generation Adidas in Dallas with the Galaxy U-16 during the same two-week period.

Recently, Watkin traveled with both teams to Indianapolis, Indiana, for the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs. The U-18 team was eliminated but the U-16 team went 3-0 and advanced to the quarterfinals. They will matchup

on Tuesday, July 8, against Michigan’s Vadar U-16 squad at the StubHub Center. The winner of the quarterfinal game advances to Finals Week at the StubHub Center July 17-19.

Watkin’s commitment to play for the Galaxy Academy includes games against other MLS Academy teams across the country throughout the 2014-15 calendar year. The only setback in this great opportunity is that Watkin will not be able to play for

Malibu High next year. The academy season conflicts with the high school soccer season.

“It’s sad not being able to play with my friends anymore but in the long term with me wanting to play professional soccer when I’m older it’s definitely better for me,” Watkin said. “The training and experience that I’m getting now is priceless compared to anywhere else. It’s probably the best training I could get in California.”



Above: Max Watkin (right) is joined by Malibu coach Julian Wright at the Galaxy alumni game.

Right: Max Watkin prepares to make a save off a header from #27 of the Galaxy alumni.



Waves finish No. 12 in country

The Pepperdine baseball team finished the season ranked as high as No. 12 in the country, according to final college baseball rankings. There are four major ranking outlets and the Waves finished rated No. 12 in three of them and No. 14 in one. The National College Baseball Writers Association, Baseball America and Collegiate Baseball all

rated Pepperdine No. 12 and the USA Today Coaches’ Poll rated the team at No. 14.

This year’s No. 12 ranking is the highest the Waves have received since their NCAA Championship season in 1992 where they ended the year as No. 1. Pepperdine finished this season with a 43-18 overall record.



Konrad Ulrich holds a trophy he won at the West Coast Tennis South Bay Junior Open.

Taking over tennis

Local athlete Konrad Ulrich recently won three United States Tennis Association (USTA) championships in the BU12 division. He is currently ranked eighth in the USTA boys satellite division in the U.S. Ulrich also recently won the West Coast Tennis South Bay Junior Open, the Manhattan Beach Junior Tournament and the Beverly Hills Spring NTRP and Junior Satellite Tournament.

Ulrich is coached by Malibu tennis pro Doug Stewart.