

Malibu boys water polo has eyes on the prize

The Sharks are 'spurred' on to the championship by way of the NBA's best.

By Dick Dornan
Special to The Malibu Times

Coming off a season where they finished as runners-up in CIF Division VI for the third time in five years, the Malibu High Sharks are still in search of their first CIF title.

The Sharks lost in the CIF Division VI championship game to Palm Desert, 8-5, eight months ago. They were also runners-up in 2008 and 2010.

With a host of talented players having graduated from a team that won 30 games last season, Malibu coach Michael Mulligan has begun rebuilding a strong squad.

To do so, Mulligan is looking at another championship-caliber team: the NBA's San Antonio Spurs.

Mulligan and the Sharks are avid fans of the Spurs' unselfish style. After losing to the Miami Heat in the NBA Finals in 2013, the Spurs reversed course and took home the championship this past June.

"We have been preaching all summer 'Spurs' water polo. We loved watching the NBA Finals. It was a team display of selflessness," Mulligan said. "We are starting to look for that extra pass and are starting to see it happening now. All summer we've been trying to get this team to mesh like last year's team."

Malibu took a huge step in that direction with a thrilling 12-8 championship game victory over El Segundo to capture the Santa Monica summer tournament last week.

The Sharks defeated El Segundo



Malibu's Phil Campanella fires a shot on goal.

Photo by Dick Dornan / TMT

(14-10), Westside (12-10) and Beverly Hills (11-4) in pool play. In the semifinals, MHS knocked off Westlake, 12-8, and beat El Segundo again in the championship.

"It was a great tournament for us,"

said Mulligan, who will begin his 24th season at Malibu in the fall. "The team really bonded and played well together."

Senior Phil Campanella led the team in goals scored for the tournament

followed by juniors Hans Cole and Spencer Sinding. Senior Dax Nittolo was superb in goal, making many key saves in the championship game. Junior Charlie Djiker made two game-saving blocks in the Westside game as he saw

action in goal as well.

Senior Max Ney and junior Jake Durrant also played well in the tournament.

Senior star Owen Franz only played in the championship game. The Tri-Valley League MVP and first-team All-CIF honoree was competing for his club team during the first part of the tournament.

"The team came together in the absence of Owen and learned how to play without him," Mulligan said. "Other people stepped up in an offensive leadership role. Phil and Hans did an outstanding job in that regard and so did Spencer."

In a very physical and fast match, the championship was tied, 8-8, heading into the fourth and final period. Neither team got up by more than two goals until the Sharks flexed their muscles. Malibu closed out the contest with four consecutive goals to win.

"Our defensive pressure stepped up and we got some good counter attack goals. We had a couple 6-on-5 opportunities that we converted upon," Mulligan said. "The boys are starting to gel as a team and their communication and defense is starting to come together."

Last season, the Sharks clinched their fourth consecutive Tri-Valley League title and 16th in the program's illustrious history. Fall camp begins with double practice days on August 11.

"Individually, talent-wise we are really good. Everyone has had plenty of opportunities to start and get significant playing time this summer," Mulligan said. "Now it's about developing the team chemistry. I'm really excited about this group of guys."

Alec Wilimovsky set to compete in the USA Triathlon National Championships

Malibu High senior took seventh place in recent race in Iowa; Nationals next on Aug. 2

By Dick Dornan
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Why not dream big when you have the world at your fingertips?

For Alec Wilimovsky, the journey has just begun. One that he hopes will culminate with a trip to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The senior from Malibu High has quickly become one of the nation's best triathletes for his age group. With every stroke, every pedal and every stride, Wilimovsky inches closer to achieving his dream in the multistage competition.

On July 13 at the 2014 Flatland Elite Cup Triathlon in Des Moines, Iowa, Wilimovsky finished seventh out of 65 competitors in the 19-and-under age group division. His time of 58:30 was a personal best in a race that entailed a 750-meter swim, 20-kilometer bike ride and 5-kilometer run. Triathlon participants compete for the best overall time.

"It went well," Wilimovsky said. "I came out of the water in fifth. I rode hard with my group [Triathlon Training Systems] and opened up a minute gap on the group behind us. I then ran my best time [17:01] and finished in seventh."

Wilimovsky, 17, now embarks upon his toughest challenge yet. The 2014 USA Triathlon National Championships will be held on August 2 in West Chester, Ohio, where the best of the best will congregate and battle in one of America's most grueling sports.

Wilimovsky will compete in the Junior Elite National Championship division, which is "draft legal." During the biking portion, competitors may draft behind each other. When bicyclists ride in a single file line, energy is conserved and wind resistance is reduced.

Currently ranked No. 1 in the nation in nondraft legal triathlons and 10th in the country for draft legal triathlons (Olympic style), Wilimovsky is ready to take on the upcoming National Championship race.

"I'm definitely excited. It's the biggest race of the year by far," he said. "I'm not nervous but there is a lot of unknown because anything can happen at Nationals. There is a lot of pressure to do well. If you finish top-five, then everyone knows who you are."

A week later on August 9 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Wilimovsky will participate in the nondrafting 2014 USA Triathlon Age Group Nationals, specifically in the 16 to 17 age group.

"Triathlon is my life. I enjoy going out on bike rides with my friends, coming to swim practice and going on some long runs," Wilimovsky said. "It's what I like doing. It's all for compet-



Photo courtesy of Alec Wilimovsky

Alec runs the third leg of the triathlon held last week in Iowa.

ing. That's what I live for. I love racing against other guys."

While many of his friends sleep in and enjoy a relaxing summer, Wilimovsky wakes up by 7:30 a.m. and is out running by 8 a.m. most mornings. The day continues with a bike ride in mid-afternoon and swim practice in the early evening.

As much as it is physical, the mental side at times can be the toughest to cope with.

"There are definitely days when I wake up and don't want to train at all," said Wilimovsky. "But then I think about all the other guys out there who are training harder than you. [You've] got to pull yourself out of bed and get going. It takes a lot of motivation and dedication."

Wilimovsky can be found daily running along the trails at Malibu Creek State Park, biking in Latigo Canyon and swimming at Malibu High.

A typical week of intense training involves an average of eight hours of swimming (two hours, four days a week), nine hours of cycling (20 to 60 miles per day, four to five times a week) and 10 hours of running (three to 10 miles a day, six days a week).

Catch your breath yet? During the school year, Wilimovsky runs cross-country for MHS in the fall



Dick Dornan / TMT

Alec Wilimovsky

and competes in track and swimming in the spring. He won two swim CIF titles as part of the Sharks' winning relay teams.

His competitive nature stems from one potentially life-changing goal.

"My ultimate goal is the Olympics and it's going to take patience for sure. It's a long way down the road and it's going to take a lot of hard work," Wilimovsky said. "Triathlon is a unique sport and you need a different mind-set for it. I feel pretty accomplished with what I have done so far."

Pepperdine promotion



Photo by Jeff Golden

Marcelo Ferreira will start the 2013-14 season at Pepperdine as head coach of the men's tennis team.

Marcelo Ferreira has been promoted to head coach of the Pepperdine men's tennis team. Ferreira had joined the Waves' staff as associate head coach for the 2013-14 season.

Ferreira is the 14th head coach in the program's history, which dates back to the 1940s. Before

coming to Pepperdine, he spent five seasons at Texas Tech as an assistant coach before being promoted to associate head coach for the 2012-13 season. His first experience in coaching was in São Paulo, Brazil where he coached at the Mauro Menezes Tennis Academy.