

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND?

It is fairly common, upon returning to our places of work on a Monday, that people will ask, "How was your weekend?" When asked about my weekend last Monday, I could only respond by saying that last weekend for me was special, memorable and proved once again what a privilege it is to be involved with education-based athletics.



I began Friday morning at the Claremont Club for our Girls Tennis Championships. Among the 5 teams that won championships that day was Beckman High School in Division 2. Beckman was the #1 seed going into this year's championships, and would have been the #1 seed in Division 2 last year. Unfortunately, Beckman did not qualify for the playoffs from their league last year, and there were no At-Large opportunities available, so they were not able to participate in our playoffs in 2016. From the moment, their season ended last year, Beckman began a mission toward redemption, and in 2017, the disappointment from a year ago motivated them to qualify for the playoffs from their league, enter our playoffs as the #1 seed and

emerge as Division 2 Champions. Mission accomplished!

Next up was the Girls Volleyball Championships at Cerritos College. I saw Archer School for Girls win their first section championship, in any sport, since they have been a member school in our organization. That touched off a wild celebration by the players, coaches and fans and deservedly so. The final match of the night saw Buckley High School, who appeared in the Championship Final 39 years ago (for the first and only time in their school's history and were runner-up's that year) come back to the Finals and win it all this year. I met Rae Basmagian, an Assistant Coach at Buckley this season, who was their Head Coach in 1979 at their last Finals appearance. She told me that the night before this year's championship game, she had the opportunity to address her players. Her message to them was, "Do not let these opportunities go by without giving the very best effort you can give because you never know when you are going to get a chance like this again. I have waited 39 years to get back to this game and I want to leave tonight as a champion." Those are certainly words to live by and the Buckley girls took those words to heart. As she left the gym that night, Rae said to me, "I will finally get my ring now."

On Saturday morning, it was off to the Woollett Aquatics Center in Irvine for our Boys' Water Polo Championships. The first match of the day featured two schools, Pacifica of Garden Grove and Buena Park, neither one who had appeared in a Championship Final before, square off in a thrilling contest won by Pacifica 9-8. After 4 more exciting Water Polo matches, it was back to Cerritos College and Girls Volleyball. Our last Girls Volleyball match of the weekend was between two nationally ranked programs, Marymount and Mater Dei. In another story of a team seeking redemption, Mater Dei not only avenged a loss to Marymount during the regular season, but won the championship this year, after being runner-up's in 2016.

So, that was my weekend and it was one I will never forget. I have had many weekends like that in the 18 years I have worked for the CIF Southern Section. The great thing is I've got another wonderful weekend to look forward to with Cross Country Championship this Saturday, and by the way, I haven't even mentioned that we have some Football games going on this weekend as well. How will your weekend be? Don't forget to #PACKTHEHOUSE!

Thank you very much for your help and support and good luck always.

All the best,

Rob Wignel

