

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

ONE FOR THE AGES



After last weekend, except for Girls Individual Tennis Championships that will proceed this week, our CIF Southern Section Fall Sports Championships have concluded. We were able to conduct all our championships on schedule, with exciting competitions across the broad spectrum of Fall Sports, and I am very proud of what has been accomplished by our member schools and our staff over the last several weeks. Working together, as we always have, has resulted in our continuing effort to build on the momentum and successes we were able to experience during the 2021-2022 school year and I am very grateful to everyone involved who has made that happen so far in 2022-2023.

We are in the business of providing meaningful opportunities and experiences for student-athletes, helping them create lifetime memories they will take with them far beyond their high school years. Throughout my tenure at the CIF Southern Section, I have had the privilege of attending countless championship events and observing so many incredible and special moments. This Fall was no exception, and what I saw on Saturday, November 12, was another unforgettable one to add to my list.

The site was the William J. Woollett Aquatics Center in Irvine and our CIF Southern Section Boys Water Polo Championships. There were seven divisional championships contested that day and the Division 6 Championship Final between Hemet High School and John Muir High School was one for the ages. Coming into this game, Hemet, the second-place team from the Sunbelt League, was the #1 seed in the division, and Muir, an at-large team from the Pacific League, in their first year as a Varsity Water Polo program, was the #2 seed. Both teams had advanced to the Championship Final in dominating fashion and were ready to finish the job and take the championship home. To say these were two teams were evenly matched is evidently clear by examining the following information...

- At the end of the First Quarter – Hemet – 6, Muir – 6
- Halftime – Hemet – 10, Muir – 9
- At the end of the Third Quarter – Hemet – 13, Muir -13
- With 4 minutes left in the game – Muir – 16, Hemet – 14
- With 10 seconds left in the game – Muir – 16, Hemet – 16

At that point, Muir advanced the ball forward to attack the Hemet goal, got the ball in the hands of Freshman Luc Garwood, (the young man holding the championship plaque in the picture below), who took a quick glance at the clock and fired away. The buzzer sounded as the ball was in the air, it ricocheted off the side of the goal cage, a little wave of water slowly pushed the ball forward and it trickled into the goal.

- Final score – Muir – 17, Hemet – 16.

What ensued from there was a wild celebration for a team who was not only playing in their first Championship Final but was in their very first season as a Varsity program. I will never forget the unbridled joy on the

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COMMISSIONERS MESSAGE NO. 4 - ONE FOR THE AGES
2-2-2

ONE FOR THE AGES (CONT.): faces of the Muir players, coaches, administrators and a large contingent of fans, some of whom had never seen a water polo game before, supporting the Mustangs by being loud and proud. As we move forward with our competitive equity playoff model, here is another example of schools getting the chance to build and grow a program, to compete at a level that is completely appropriate for them to compete in and repeatedly get to see student-athletes achieve their goals and dreams.

The picture below says it all. Congratulations to Head Coach Micol Issa and the 2022 CIF Southern Section Boys Water Polo Division 6 Champions, the John Muir High School Mustangs!



Thank you very much for your continued help and support, it is truly appreciated.

All the best,

Rob Wignel

