



ATHLETICS

The athletic program is a generally major component of every high school's culture. It provides the venue for students to learn to compete and learn how to handle victory and accept defeat. It is also the most visible way a school gets publicity. Public perception often times equates athletic success, or the lack of it, to reflect the culture of the entire school.



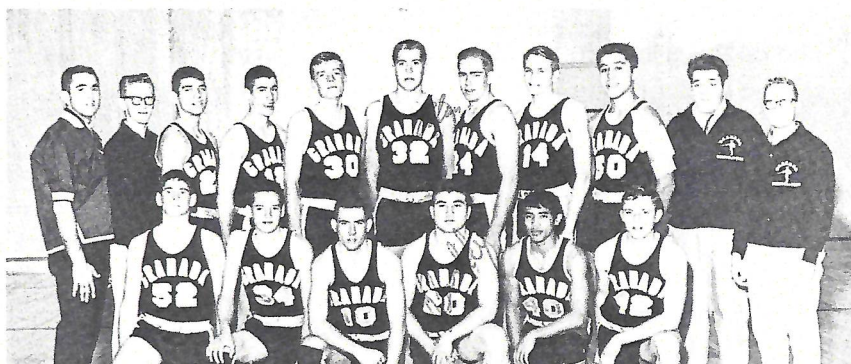
In 1963 Granada became the second high school in Livermore. To the Granada students it was a new beginning but to the established citizenry, many of them Livermore High School alumni, Granada represented the "stepchild."

The school was tolerated, but not accepted as an equal to LHS. This disdain for "the other school" was soon reciprocated by Granada. Early on the young Matadors referred to LHS as "rinky-dink" high.

The complexity of the big brother, little-brother syndrome manifested itself on the athletic fields. Granada entered varsity competition with a junior class in 1965. As expected, success did not come at once in athletics. It was not until 1970 that Granada recorded its first varsity win over Livermore in football. Other sports, though, notably wrestling and basketball, had more immediate success. Remember, too, this was before Title IX, and girls' athletics were confined to G.A.A. (Girl's Athletic Association), which were mostly "friendly" competitions against neighboring rivals (Livermore, Dublin, Pleasanton) in basketball, field hockey and swimming.

Wrestling, coached by Dan Rix, had immediate success. They were EBAL champions three consecutive years, 1966, 1967 and 1968. The 1968 team was undefeated. Steve Page, later to be a head varsity wrestling coach at both Livermore and Granada, was a member of that team.

Basketball, too, was successful in the mid-1960s. The same team that recorded a 2-12 EBAL record in its first varsity season came back to win league titles in 1966 and 1967. Coach Pat Francisco was the first basketball



coach at Granada and coached the team until the early 1980s.

Basketball had a nice new gym, but the other sports were not so fortunate with the facilities they had. Until 1967 the football team bussed to May Nissen Park to practice. The games were played at the Livermore High School stadium either on a Friday night (if Livermore had an away game or on a Saturday afternoon.) It was not until 1967 that the football team practiced on campus. But even that facility was sub-standard. As Head Football Coach George Wilson reflected, “We had a 60 yard field directly behind the 400 building—for three teams. We had no goalposts. I had to put my manager out there with his arms in the air to simulate a goal post when we tried conversions.”⁷⁰

But even the lack of facilities did not deter a gathering momentum of pride on campus. Students did not need pennants hung on the gymnasium wall to be a measure of their success. The first generation of students formed a strong bond around the school and its teachers. It was a form of pioneer spirit that held these students together. Add to this that Granada came under fire because of its unique schedule (TUFOLD) and there developed an “us against the world” attitude on campus. This was manifested in a *Herald and News* article that suggested the early lack of athletic success was a reflection of the school’s schedule. This article led two students, Calvin Kreutzberg and Randy Jones, to circulate a petition in support of the schedule. Based on this petition, Kevin Parrish, Sports Editor of *The Herald and News* wrote the following:

Their petition carries some weight. Almost every football and basketball player signed it gladly along with more than 300 other students, including all cheerleaders.

The coaches didn’t get up a formal document to express their opinion of TUFOLD. They merely did it vocally. They said, one and all, that modular scheduling was not the cause of Granada’s down year.

It’s funny that all those who are opposed to TUFOLD are not really involved with it. And, by the same token, all those who are connected with it, support it overwhelmingly.

Unity

Granada has it and another word, a by-product of unity---pride.

At Granada High School, without a doubt, there is unity. Take a walk around that campus; the place reeks with something unique, something special.

The coaches feel it, the faculty and administration feel it and, most important of all, the students feel it.

It is this rare commodity---unity.⁷¹

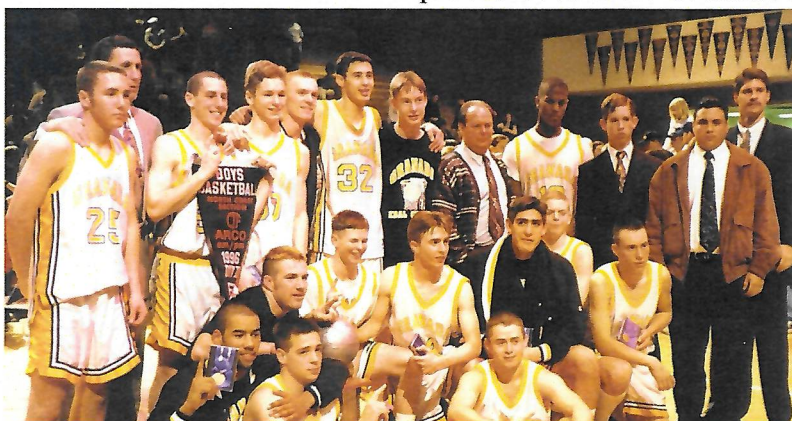
⁷⁰ George Wilson, April 3, 2014

⁷¹ Kevin Parrish, Sports Editor, *The Herald and News*, March, 1971

The term “Granada Pride” was not the brainchild of some coach or administrator trying to capture the moment. It was an attitude that started with the first “pioneer student, teachers and administrators” and developed into a way of life at Granada.

The Granada Pride concept has never been solely associated with winning, even though successful athletic teams do bring this concept to near frenzy level. This frenzy did reach new a high during the 1995 and 1996 basketball seasons at Granada. In an earlier section, we wrote about a night rally at the school before the first NCS playoff game in 1995. Much was made of this game since it had been 29 years between championships for the basketball team. After this rally, Mitch Stephens, sportswriter for *The Valley Times*, wrote, “I wish every sports fan could have seen it. On second thought. I wish everyone could have.”⁷² A visiting principal said to Granada principal Kevin Drake, “I didn’t know there were still schools like this.”⁷³

The 1996 basketball season proved even more eventful as the basketball team captured the



North Coast Championship for the first time. The entire town got behind this team as it prepared for the NorCal Championship at the Oakland Coliseum against Grant High School of Sacramento. The following column by Mitch Stephens summarized this game beautifully:

Dear Diary: I’m following Granada High School’s boys basketball team’s attempt at a first-ever Northern California championship.

11:45am: The team carpools into a vast, vacant parking lot, 90 minutes before game-time. Lightning quick opponent Grant-Sacramento is already on its tail as team bus pulls aside Matadors and notes formal suit-and-tie attire.

“They look scared,” blurts out a Grant player. Granada senior Cliff Johnston smiles and teammate Ben Sapone winces, but neither look back.

12:20pm: Matadors take floor for the shoot-around. The Granada faithful, who fill four sections at the second level, roar their approval. Coach Greg Gomes fold his arms, glances to the fans and with one giant breath take it all in.

“It can’t possibly get better than this,” he says.

12:45pm: Gomes gathers his team and like a calm father before his son’s wedding, smiles. “There are 4,000 fans out there who came because of you and win or lose they will love you just as much.

⁷² Mitch Stephens, *The Valley Times*, March 1, 1995

⁷³ Kevin Drake, *Mat Update*, April 1995

‘We heard the comments from their bus. Of course we have nothing to be frightened of as long as you play hard, as you have for the last three years. I have no doubt you will.’

Gomes then covers Grant’s strengths, particularly its quickness. “Passes have to be crisp, their hands are active. You gotta play strong.”

1:20pm: The Matadors open a 7-point lead at halftime. Grant is keying its defense on Chris Johnson, but instead Johnston lights it up for 13 first-half points, including his second 3-pointer with 1:03 left. After a Grant turnover, Sapone swings a crisp crosscourt pass to Chris Gomes, who nails a 16-footer at the buzzer: Granada 32, Grant 25.

2:00pm: Ball boy Justin Gomes, 9, greets older brother Chris Gomes in the locker room with a thump to the chest. The team is excited but not celebrating.

“Sixteen minutes,” Johnson yells.

Coach Gomes singles out Sapone’s passing and the reserve play of Sam Green, who had to spell Johnson with three fouls. “Sometimes good things come out of misfortune,” the coach says. “We’re forced to go to a zone defense and they had trouble with it.”

He warns that Grant will come even harder the second half. Someone notes that the Pacers all go to the offensive boards, “We can run on them.” he says.

2:25pm: An outside jumper by Gomes gives the Matadors a 37-27 lead with 6:03 left in the third, when disaster strikes Granada. The 3-point shooting of LaRon Bryant and great slashing to the basket by Ronnie Walton keys a 14-0 Grant run.

2:40pm: The game see-saws from there and with 3:19 left in the game, Granada calls a timeout, trailing 53-50. Said coach Gomes: “After we score let’s go with what brought us to the dance, man-to-man pressure. This time down, get the ball to Chico (Chris Gomes’s nickname).”

Sapone and Johnston do the next two times down and Chico delivers two buckets, giving Granada a 54-53 lead.

Walton then takes over, scoring four in a six-point run giving Grant a 59-54 lead with 1:01 left. Timeout. Said coach Gomes: “It’s a two-possession game, we don’t need a three yet. Push it down court and don’t hand your heads. It’s not over.”

Johnson drives through the middle and scoops in a layup. He then steals a pass and calls Granada’s final timeout with 44 seconds left. Said coach Gomes: “Pound the sucker inside, but if they double, be ready to shoot the three.”

Green finds Johnson all alone for a layup with 31 seconds left. Grant 50-Granada 58. Deonta Durrough misses the front end of a one-on-one 11 seconds later. Chris Gomes rebounds. It comes down to one possession.

3:00pm: Johnson gets the ball to Johnston with 10 ticks left. Johnston drives through the lane and is short with a floater. The ball bounces toward the baseline, where Sapone misses a jumper while going out of bounds. Three tips later the ball bounces away and the final horn sounds.

Johnson falls to the floor and weeps. Green slams his fist against a chair. Chris Gomes pulls at his hair. Justin Gomes sobs behind the bench.

Coach Gomes sits his players down as CIF officials hand out ribbons. "You guys played a great game," he says repeatedly. A large contingent of Granada fans gather behind the bench "We are proud of you," they chant.

3:30pm: Coaches and players meet in press room to talk about the last possession. Said Sapone, "The whole season was on the line and it was a pinball machine out there." Said Satterwhite (Grant coach): "There was never a doubt."

3:45pm: Coach Gomes gathers his team in the locker room. You can hear a pin drop. He reflects on a season worth of memories. "Whatever you do, keep this feeling with you."⁷⁴



⁷⁴ Mitch Stephens, *The Valley Times*, March 10, 1996, p. 9D

GIRLS' ATHLETICS

Title IX is the federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in schools that receive federal funding — including the athletics' programs. Prior to the passage of this law in 1972, girls' athletics were primarily recreational. At Granada High School in the 1960s girls' athletics were under the umbrella of the Girl's Athletic Association (G.A.A.). The primary sports



girls engaged in prior to 1972 were field hockey, volleyball and basketball.

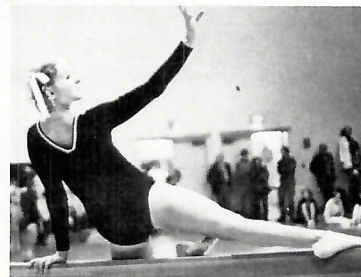
Donna Fong, a physical education teacher at GHS, was the primary teacher coach of the G.A.A. teams. She recalls setting up "friendly" matches in field hockey with a friend of hers at Berkeley High School.⁷⁵ The same held true in

basketball and volleyball. Matches were usually held against rivals Livermore and Amador, as well as Dublin and San Ramon.

The girls' swim program was under the G.A.A. until it became part of the league during the 1973-74 season, and won EBAL championships in 1974 and 1975. Tennis mirrored swimming and started EBAL competition in 1974, with single round-robin only, consisting of only five single matches. In 1976 another single match was added, as well as doubles, and double round-robin started. Track became a league sport in the 1975 season.

Basketball did not become a league sport until 1976, and in its first year, the Matadors finished second (10-4) in the EBAL under Coach Dave Ramm.

During the period of the late 60s to mid-1970s the most successful girls' athletic program was gymnastics. This was organized as a club sport, and since most schools did not have a gymnastics team, the Granada girls traveled throughout Northern California for competition. Under Coach Don Phillips, the Matadors won two NorCal titles. Late in the decade a couple of things meshed to terminate the gymnastics program. The most prominent was the issue of liability. It was more and more difficult for the school district to insure the program. The potential for serious injury coupled with the fact that there were few people trained to coach the multiple disciplines of the sport finally proved too much for the sport to continue.



Similar to gymnastics, another club sport in existence at Granada in the late 60's and early 70's was fencing. Under the tutelage of teacher Bernie Segal, the fencing team was very successful in the competition that existed. Like many other extra-curricular programs at Granada, this sport demonstrated the innovative spirit that existed at GHS.

⁷⁵ Donna Fong, March 13, 2014

It was not until 1981, nearly a full decade after the Boys' Soccer program was added to the EBAL, that the girls' soccer program became part of the league. And when Granada began league play, did they ever make an impact.



overall NCS play. She coached the women's program for 23 years, retiring in 2003 from Granada High.

Not only did she coach women's soccer during her years at Granada High School, but starting in 1983 she also coached the women's softball team. She quickly turned the softball team into league champions, winning the league title in 1983, 1984 and 1987. Her winning percentage by 1988 was 70% and her record then was 72-32-1. She led the Matadors to two NCS appearances, and went on to coach the softball team until 1993. In May 2014 she was inducted into the Livermore



Sports Hall of Fame.

The 1995 softball team, under Coach Rich Simmons, captured the NCS title, and repeated this accomplishment in 1997.

The girls' soccer teams of the early to mid-1980s were the most successful sports programs in Granada's early history. The success of the girls' soccer and softball programs under Julie Macias was picked up by the



girls' volleyball teams of the mid-1980s and together became the beacon of sports success at GHS.

THE STREAK

Arguably the greatest athletic achievement in Granada's first 50 years was "the streak" of 153 consecutive league wins by the Girls' Volleyball team from 1985-1996.

The streak started during the second year of Coach Charlie Brown's tenure. In fact it began toward the end of the 1985 season. From this inauspicious beginning, the Granada girls reeled off ten consecutive undefeated league seasons. Aside from capturing league titles during this

stretch, the team also captured three NCS championships, and in 1991 came within a game of capturing the State Championship.

After that 1991 game the following editorial appeared in *The Herald and News*:

THOSE AMAZING MATADORS

Granada High Schools girl's volleyball team has set a standard of excellence that may never be beaten.

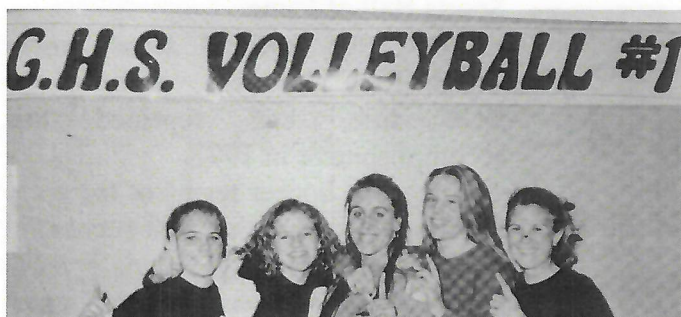
The Matadors lost a tough match last Saturday to finish second in the California Interscholastic Federation championships. They finished with a 38-3-1 record.

Granada's record in the East Bay Athletic League, which ends this year when the East Bay leagues are reorganized, is simply phenomenal. Granada has won 81 straight league matches and 103 in a row against EBAL competition. Granada has captured seven straight league titles.

The Mats also own four North Coast Section titles. This year's win earned them the right to compete in the state finals for the second time in three years.

We congratulate Coach Charles Brown and team members Sam Akins, Lisa Aying, Tina Benjamin, Bobbi Cole, Amy Dickson, Lindy Forsberg, Andrea Petrilli, Monica Petrilli, Krisi Robins, Shannon Roemmich, Suzie Severyn and Kathy Fleming. They've done themselves, their school and their families proud.⁷⁶

On November 8, 1995 the girls were playing Dublin High School in a semi-final league match. After their three-set victory they had captured their 145th straight league win and thought this win eclipsed the old State record. They then discovered they had actually captured it earlier



in a win against Amador. The previous record was 141 consecutive league victories held by Santa Fe Springs (1967-1991). First year coach Betsy Wilson said, "What a great accomplishment. I'm so proud of this group because more than any of the other teams, they had to feel so much pressure. They should feel proud. I know I do."⁷⁷

Added outside hitter Alena Wilson, "It (the streak) has been a burden but so much fun at the same time. Knowing we have the state record is unbelievable. We did it for all the Granada players from the past but for ourselves too. We're going to get 146 (tonight)."⁷⁸ They did get number 146 that evening by defeating rival Livermore High School.

The streak ended in fall, 1996. That year Granada left the EBAL and entered a new league consisting of Granada, Foothill, Las Lomas, Campolindo, Miramonte, Acalanes, and Benicia. It was called the Tri-Counties Athletic League (TCAL). Miramonte, led by future U.S. Olympian, Nicole Branagh, defeated the Matadors, thus ending the streak at 153 games. (Note: the streak of

⁷⁶ *The Herald and News*, December 12, 1991. p.14a

⁷⁷ *Valley Times*, November 8, 1995 p. 40

⁷⁸ *Valley Times*, November 8, 1995 p. 40

153 consecutive league victories has since been broken, and Granada's streak between 1985-1995 now resides in fourth place statewide)

The Streak

1985	3-0
1986	16-0
1987	16-0
1988	16-0
1989	16-0
1990	14-0
1991	14-0
1992	14-0
1993	15-0
1994	10-0
1995	12-0

North Coast Championships

1991
1992
1993

The Players (1985-1995)

Becky Howard
Lara Brown
Jeanette Petrilli
Jamie Lima
Molly Jacobs
Emily Oatney
Chris Kennedy
Marcy Witt
Karen Mazrimas
Suzie Severyn
Amy Dickson
Monica Petrilli
Andrea Petrilli
Michelle Boydson
Jill Molitor
Jamie Gonzales
Kathy Severyn
Kristine Lehew
Caren Wilder
Andrea Jacobs
Georgia Lund
Lorie Hinton

Debbie Lupeika
Jodie Mitchell
Deede Dickman
Niki Drullard
Melissa Witt
Monica Soth
Sam Akins
Kathy Fleming
Bobbie Cole
Shannon Roemmich
Bobbi Freeland
Amber Turnbeaugh

Jessica Knott
Michelle Roberts
Alia Downs
Kara Yeoman
Betsy Welsh
Julie Niceswanger
Colleen Langeloh
Stefani Davies
Kathleen Newman
Kathy Hannon
Brook Raguskus
Chris Corie
Krisi Robins
Tina Benjamin
Lisa Aying
Lindy Forsberg
Andrea Alvarez
Michelle Webb
Eileen Mantz
Alena Wilson
Jocelyn Seng
Cathy Coupar
Debbie Totten

The Coaches:

Charlie Brown, Head
Becky Wilson, Head
Meg Kilday, Assistant
Rob Wullenwaber, Assistant