Meet Cal Poly’s freshman volleyball sensation
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Cal Poly has two cheerleading teams.

The first shows up to the big fan-packed games and has custom-made uniforms and pompons. The second is a team of two, a husband and wife.

Rena and Herb Metras, married for more than 50 years, have homemade uniforms, pompons and signs. Rather than perform high-flying stunts, the two perform their own unrehearsed routine.

“We’re actually having a ball,” Rena said. The couple have been coming to Cal Poly games for about three years. Before that they were cheering for the Blues, a local semiprofessional baseball team. It was only because of a mistake that they started cheering for Cal Poly.

The Metras’ came to cheer on the men’s baseball team one day but, when they got to the stadium they realized they had made a mistake, the team was out of town. Rather than go home, they stayed to watch a women’s softball game.

“We got hooked,” Rena said. Now the announcers recognize and call them “Super Fans.”

At first she cheered in sweats until one day when it was 94 degrees in the shade. She thought if she had to wear shorts, “I might as well wear something appropriate,” she said. That’s when she made her green and gold skirt.

The couple said they try to come to the games that don’t have as many fans, especially the women’s games.

“We went to a men’s basketball game and they have everything there,” Herb said. “We went to a women’s game and they didn’t have anything.”

Although Herb coached in the Babe Ruth League, neither played sports or cheered while they were in school. In fact, Rena confesses she was very shy.

“I was very shy in high school,” she said. But when asked if she’s shy now she is adamant.

“Oh no, not any more. I came out of my shell...I guess I’m kind of rambunctious,” she said with a chuckle.

All their cheering and support has not gone unnoticed. In fact, last year the couple was invited to the annual awards ceremony for Cal Poly athletes where they were asked to lead a cheer. More than that, Rena said she gives the teams little pep talks now and then.

Cheering means a great deal to the two.

“When we don’t have it, we miss it. It’s just nice to be around young people, it makes you feel younger. At this stage in our lives it means a lot,” Rena said. The only time the couple does miss a game is when they are dancing in one of their ballroom performances in Los Angeles.

All this and yet neither went to Cal Poly, but they have lived in San Luis Obispo for more than 47 years.

As honorary Mustangs, the two hope they are serving many purposes with their cheers.

“Hopefully we are helping keep up the (athletes’) self esteem and spirit,” Rena said. They build the fans’ spirits too.

“We try to get the fans excited. If they get involved they have a good time then they come back and you get bigger crowds. Even if I have a handful of people and I can get them to yell, it’s OK,” she said.
Kari DeSoto, 6-feet, 3-inches tall, stands as the tallest freshman at Cal Poly, added that this year's team may not be the fastest or dig every ball and dominate like the team did in the past. Under first-year head coach Steve Schlick, the 12-10 Mustangs have developed themselves into a respectable Division I team in the Big West Conference in just one year.

"I think that we as a team have made great strides this season," Schlick said. "I think our skill level has improved — our drive to compete is improving. The team is consistently getting better every day."

The level of competition the Mustangs play against has helped them improve and the immensely talented Big West Conference, has the perfect place for Cal Poly to do that.

Schlick said that the higher level of competition in the Big West was expected.

"It's just a matter of the team continuing to take the steps to get better," Schlick said. "There is no reaching a point of being so good that we don't have to continue to improve."

At the beginning of the season, the team set clear and achievable goals. Schlick said she is grateful to Kari for being a reminder to try to win, but to enjoy the game as well.

"Kari is rad," freshman outside hitter Jessica Roden said. "She makes everybody on the team smile and laugh. She makes practice more fun."

Roden said she is grateful to have a fellow freshman friend like Kari on the team, so they can share experiences for at least four years.

By seeing DeSoto play with intensity, the team becomes stronger, Roden said. "She is inspirational because she does as well on the court," Roden said.

DeSoto's teammates look at her as a reminder to try to win, but to enjoy the game as well.

"I'd like for us to start winning more," she said. "There are some bumps we need to get over, but we're improving a lot."

Her inspiration in life and in sport comes from her parents, Karen and Chris DeSoto. She is an only child and her parents make the trip west to watch all of her games at Cal Poly.

"My parents are a big part of my life," DeSoto said. "I can think of a million things my Dad says to me before I play. He is probably my number one fan."

She said San Luis Obispo was the perfect choice for a college town, for it is not too far away from home and not too close.

DeSoto is studying human development, but like many freshmen is unsure of her future career. She said she chose the major because of the many job possibilities.

Whether her career relates to counseling or teaching it will include children.

"I love kids," she said. "I like working with kids."

For now, she will enjoy her friends and dorm life when she is not blocking her side of the court.
Mustangs face Aggies in Homecoming showdown

By Greg Manifold
Daily Sports Editor

The Cal Poly football team is in the midst of a novel.

When the Mustangs face U.C. Davis on Saturday they will write Chapter Nine, and when it's all said and done they hope the chapter will be worth remembering.

**Football**

Kickoff for the Homecoming game is set for 1:30 p.m. at Mustang Stadium and Cal Poly will be looking to improve its 3-5 record.

"The football season is a long one. It's real important that players understand that each week has its own individual path," said Cal Poly head coach Andre Patterson. "So it's like a chapter in a book."

Patterson doesn't like to look back over the chapters Cal Poly has already written this season. "Once you've written a chapter, you've got to move on to the next chapter. You can't go back and rewrite the last one," Patterson added. "It's already in ink and you've already sent it to the printer, there's nothing you can do about it. It's gone."

"So whether you think about it now and it wasn't very good or it was great, you've got to move on to the next chapter and make it a better one," he said. "After we play Sac State we'll be able to know if we wrote a best seller, an average book or if we've written a flop."

So far this season's plot deals with a trough of injuries and high caliper opponents.

A plethora of Mustangs have been injured this season. Running back Antonio Warren had to red-shirt this season because of a broken leg suffered early in the season.

In all, seven predicted starters at the beginning of the season are out with injuries.

A plethora of Mustangs have been injured this season. Running backs against Davis, which it has back Nate Ecklund attempts 106 attempts for one touchdown with a fellow Wangi Lold celebrates a Mustangs 41-14 victory over Central Washington / Daily photos by Joe match, he goes around and Johnston and Sean McMamara every one of his players makes a name for himself within the community, not only as a coach, but as a prominent caring, exciting and motivational individual.

This year, for the first time in program history, Cal Poly football is a Division I-AA Independent. But due to an injury plagued season, Cal Poly's current record is mere 3-5, with only three games remaining in the season.

Patterson has a far different view than your average coach might have during a struggling season.

"I'm patient, but I'm not that patient," he said. "We wanted to be a playoff team this year and we're going to work next year to be a playoff team. We want to make it happen as soon as we can."

His first year at Cal Poly was a different story, with a much better ending. In 1994, he led the Mustangs to the American West Conference championship, guiding them to a 7-4 record. Named "Coach of the Year" for his work, he also helped the team rank fifth in the country in rushing defense.

A 1985 graduate of the University of Montana, Patterson was excited at the thought of coming to Cal Poly to coach.

"I felt that coming here and trying to mold this program into a successful football program would be a great challenge," he said. "The biggest thing that brought me here was San Luis Obispo and the academic reputation of this University."

And he is happy to be here. Collecting an overall record of 15-15, Patterson is more than pleased with how far this program has come.

I'm very lucky in my opinion, obviously its a prejudice opinion. I have the best players in the world to coach," he said. "I have great young men and great player. But they're not just good people, they're legitimate student athletes and that goes a long way for me."

Even though the game of football is very important to Patterson, he takes pride in the fact that nothing is more important to him than his players.

"The only reason I do this job is for my players," he said. He continued by explaining he will do everything possible to make his players successful students, to help them be successful athletes and help them to grow into men.

"I don't view myself as being a successful coach based on wins and losses. I know my success on whether I'm graduating my players," he said.

One thing Patterson likes to do, on the field, for his team is a little something that takes place on game days. Prior to each match, he goes around and touches every one of his players as they're stretching because he doesn't know whether they are going to leave that game healthy or not.

"I want them to know that I'm there with them, and I'm by their side," he said.

As for the future, Patterson is excited about what lies ahead for his squad.

"My vision is to one day take this team to the Division I-AA playoffs and to one day play in and win a National Championship," he said. "I think that's a reasonable goal for this program and I think the players and coaches want to go out there and make it happen."

Sports Editor Greg Manifold contributed to this story.
Stepping up...

Running back Antonio Warren was supposed to shoulder the rushing responsibilities for the Mustangs this season, but with him injured, it gave newcomer Craig Young a chance to shine.

Craig Young doesn’t want to be like everyone else. The 20-year-old Cal Poly running back isn’t your typical football player or your typical college student. He doesn’t like having people walk up on him. He doesn’t like it when the press wants to talk to only him and not the rest of his team. He’s not a showboat. He doesn’t like it when people over-celebrate in the endzone and take all the credit for themselves.

Instead, he is a shy, quiet, humble young man who doesn’t have much to say about himself. But, he is willing to talk for hours about how great the Mustangs’ offense is or how much his mom means to him.

And this is all fine with him. "I’m just really humble," Young said. "I just want try to sidle in with everyone else, I’m not trying to be out front, I just want to be regular."

It is this modesty, this unwillingness to honestly admit how much he has achieved, that has made him excel at football and in life.

"That’s how I am. If I was the type of person that would brag after the game in the interviews and was like, I did this and I did that, I wouldn’t have comfortable," he said. "I don’t want people to look back on me and say what I did and say, Man that was the one who danced in the endzone when he scored or ‘he used to talk a lot of mess.’

I want them to say, ‘he was a coolidge kid, he was a good player and he really respected his teammates,’ "he added. "That’s just how I want people to think about me."

And this is how Young’s teammates and coaches think of him.

Head coach Andre Patterson said Young has a good heart and that his modesty is the part of him that "makes him so special."

"He’s humble," Patterson said. "As a football coach, I am fortunate to have a kid like this in the team."

Offensive line coordinator Phil Earley agreed.

"He is a very confident guy, but not a cocky confident," Earley said. "He’s a self confident kind of person and is very quick to point out that it’s the offensive line that is getting the job done (for him), that it’s the receivers making the plays, opening up the run game."

One thing about Young that comes into question is his weight. Listed in the football media guide as standing at 5’11” and weighing 190 pounds, he is not exactly huge compared to other running backs. "Craig’s more of a full back and-hurt-into-it-player," Earley said. "We have a saying here you play football only you have to be bigger than the ball."

"If you are gonna be smaller, it is better than to be quieter and that’s a real asset that Craig has," he added. "He’s got speed, he’s got quickness, but he’s got toughness too."

Cal Poly came close to never having Young, who took a brief detour before tearing up the grass in the spring of 1995. He played for American at junior college before enrolling at Cal Poly in 1994 from Florin High School in Sacramento, he spent one semester at a local junior college before enrolling at the Poly.

After graduating in 1994 from the Eastern University of the Pacfic (UOP) in the spring of 1995. He played for one semester at UOP before the school decided to terminate its football program.

I could have just stayed there and done school, but I wanted to play football," Young said.

The end of UOP's football program was probably one of the best things to happen to Cal Poly, especially with standout running back Antonio Warren redshirting this season due to a broken right arm he sustained at the start of the season.

Young, who started up spring training at Cal Poly in 1996, has helped the Mustangs fill the void left with Warren out. Early in October, he was named NCAA I-A/M-WCA Player of the Week for his record-breaking performance in Cal Poly’s game against St. Mary’s.

On the year, Young, who leads the Mustangs in rushing, has 583 yards on 96 carries and five touch downs, with a 5.7 yard per carry.

Despite these numbers — which are guaranteed to grow before Cal Poly’s last game against Cal State-Northridge — Young doesn’t feel any pressure from his teammates.

"I’m relaxed before the game, because that’s just how I am," he said.

To Young, isn’t football in the mood of the day, a part of his life and he believes that he conducts himself on the field reflects how he was raised.

"When I am down here (on field), I represent myself," he said. "When I take three tackles as a guy that I have been taught by my mother."

If Young’s life is the jigsaw pieces that put the puzzle together, those pieces combined would spell "gung-ho football."

Even at the young age of eight, Young was good. His team only scored one touchdown in its season, and he was the one who scored it.

But, he doesn’t like to talk about that or any of his other achievements.

"When people tell me I’ve played well, I just say thank you and say I’m just trying to get better — I’m just trying to play my sport," he said.

When push comes to shove, Young is just a nice guy who enjoys his sport as much as the next athlete. He just wants to play with no strings attached.

I don’t like attention. I look at football and I know — I am going to try and say this in the most modest way I can — I know I am a good football player,” he said. "I know that people watch me when I am on the field. I just wouldn’t want people to look at me and just see this guy who thinks he is above everything. I want them to look at me and see someone who has sense, someone who respects the game and does his job."

A constant contributor on defense

For defensive lineman Jonathan Trotter, football was a hobby — a sport that wasn’t intended as a future career or even expected to place him in the Division I-A spotlight.

But after starting all four years and being one of Cal Poly’s dominant players, Trotter has achieved recognition as a top athlete by his teammates, coaches and fans. He’s one of the Mustangs’ All-American candidates this year as well as a captain this season.

But, the 22-year-old doesn’t try to think about the prestige, he just wants to enjoy the game.

"It’s not something I’m biasing my season on," Trotter said. "I want to win, if I get three tackles and win, we then win, then I’m happy. All America is something that is just an added bonus."

So far this year Trotter has 54 tackles, second only to defensive back Kiko Griffin, who has 62.

It’s not managed to stay on top despite suffering from a shoulder injury during the St. Mary’s game a few weeks ago.

"It was really hard to watch the (St. Mary’s) game because I’ve played practically every game since I joined," he said. "We started for four years and to not be able to play and watch and know that have to be a cheerleader was really hard."

He came back the next week, though, to play what he called the best game of his life against Southern Utah.

"I was like a little kid in a candy store," Trotter said. "I just wanted to play the game."

After the Southern Utah game, Trotter now thinks he can achieve top defensive status.

"I wanted to be the number one tackler, I wanted to be the leading tackler on the team because I was second to last the previous years," Trotter said. "I was glad because I was third or fourth on the team with tackles, and now I think I should be at least one or two. It made me put back in the race."

According to Defensive Coordinator Eric Jackson, Trotter can make a lot of things happen. "I think the strengths for Jon Trotter are that he’s a smart athlete and that he’s very athletic, which allows him to make a lot of plays," Jackson said.

In the 1994 Sonoma State game, Trotter recorded three interceptions, had three tackles, and two pass breakups.

"That was the best I felt after a game," Trotter said. "To come off and get three interceptions and to think we won, I played well, and I’m starting next week."

That year Trotter was First Team All-American West Conference Defensive Back and named Cal Poly’s first ever American West Conference Defensive Player of the Week.

A week before the Sonoma State game, Trotter was almost ready to quit football. The team lost its last four games and Trotter was benched for the second game.

"I know that sometimes you get kids, it helped me mature as a football player and it put me in a situation where I had to work, he said. "It is a fair under me and made me work a little harder."

Trotter didn’t think he would be playing football in college. He played all four years at Stanger High School, ending with an exceptional senior year.

Football is something that is more or less a hobby. If I happen to be good at it then I happen to be good at it and, if I didn’t happen to be good at it then it wasn’t going to be for me," Trotter said. "Once I was here, I was here and once I graduate from here, I know that I’ll all right."

The electrical engineering senior has talked to a few pro-ball scouts, but he is more concerned with this season rather than football afterward.

"Trotter doesn’t consider himself a role model. Personally, I don’t think so, but I probably am," Trotter said. "They’re my friends and I’m going to joke around with them and play with them because that’s just me. If they take my role model then that’s even better."

By Melanie M. Gideon
Daily Assistant Managing Editor

By Trad Roach
Daily Staff Writer

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Mustangs meet Bruins Saturday

By Greg Manfull
Daily Sports Editor

Last November Cal Poly and UCLA were battling in the first round of the NCAA Division I men's soccer playoffs.

**Men's Soccer**

UCLA was able to escape with a narrow 2-1 victory at home, and reached the second round of the playoffs before being knocked off by Santa Clara.

This year the Mustangs and Bruins square off at Mustang Stadium this Saturday at 7 p.m. But with a 4-1-0 record (11-1-2 overall), UCLA is the most successful team in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, the Mustangs aren't playing for a chance to move on, instead they're playing for respect.

"The pride and tradition of UCLA soccer radiates," said Cal Poly head coach Wolfgang Gartner. "UCLA is the most successful team in the region over the last 10 to 15 years."

"Judgment day is coming soon for the Cal Poly women's soccer team," said one of the women's soccer committee, said one of the men's side has improved on the men's side has improved on the pack concept is what the Mustangs' way, Gartner said.

"Their season is synonymous with the team, he worked hard and did everything, but his soul out onto the field, butucky bounces — he got gone.

"We had plenty of luck last year," Gartner recalled. "Maybe it's an averaging-out of our luck last year. When you have it you get more, when you don't have it you get none."

**Key men's soccer players**

**UCLA**

- This season: Leads MPSF in goals against average (0.88)
- Last year against Cal Poly: 9 saves
- 1 goal allowed

**Cal Poly**

- This season: 8 goals and 4 assists
- 2nd in the MPSF in goals scored and total points (20)
- Last year against UCLA: Managed one shot on goal

**Cross Country**

The runners will compete Saturday in Boise at the Big West Conference championships. Boise State is the only conference school to be ranked nationally this season, and are the favorites to win this year's meet.

"They have two very balanced squads and are favored to win, especially on their home course," said head coach Terry Crawford. "We are the challenger and not the favorites. We expect to be the spoiler and see some upsets."

For the Mustangs, Crawford said, is to cash in on their pack style of running, keeping the first five finishers on the team within 30 seconds of one another.

Each team competes with seven runners, using the top five for placing.

Sophomore Greg Phister said that the pack concept is what the Mustangs' side has improved on the most.

"At the beginning of the season our top five runners were finishing in a minute and a half apart. We've worked that down to 35 seconds in our last meet," he said.

Phister said he attributes the improvement to assistant coach Mark Conover who took over for previous coach Brooks Johnson who left Cal Poly in June. Conover was a 1988 Olympic marathoner and 1992 and 1996 Olympic trials qualifier.

"Our biggest improvement was that we've run a lot more mileage this year and are running as a team," Phister said.

Sophomore Amber Robinson, said that the new conference is the greatest challenge.

"This is really exciting for us since last year's conference was pretty much a joke," he said.
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