Missing student case remains open

Janelle Eastridge

A judge ruled Feb. 2 that the ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Kristin Smart, a Cal Poly student who vanished in 1996, is not considered cold. This ruling allows the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Department to continue to investigate the case. Judge Charles Crandall set a September re-examination hearing to review the file for perhaps the final time. If no major investigative discoveries are made before then, the case will most likely be declared cold, he told The Tribune.

"Plaintiffs are pleased with the ruling — the case remains stared, yet is being actively investigated by the Sheriff's Department, according to the camera review of the sheriff's detective's declaration," said Tara Coates, attorney for Stan and Denise Smart, Kristin Smart's parents, in an e-mail interview. Crandall has met with the Sheriff's Department every six months to review the case and determine whether the case should be closed. If the judge rules that the case is cold at the September hearing, records and documents from the investigation hearing will be closed.

Police anticipate a Mardi Gras with "significantly less" police officers from Feb. 16 to 20, following the presence of 450 officers in 2005 and 350 in 2006.

Low-key Mardi Gras ahead

Josh Krane

The local police presence during this weekend's Mardi Gras celebrations will be scaled back considerably compared to the previous two years, the San Luis Obispo Police Department said. After a large-scale riot during the 2004 celebrations led to 206 arrests, the San Luis Obispo Police Department increased its police force nearly eight times for the past two Mardi Gras weekends, drawing heavily on officers from neighboring departments.

Though figures were not released, the police presence will be "significantly less" for this year’s celebrations, which take place Feb. 16-20, said San Luis Obispo Police Department Capt. Dan Blanke. In 2005 there were 450 officers and 350 in 2006.

"We're saying it's going to be a significant presence," said Blanke, who is in charge of police operations for Mardi Gras weekend. "We're confident that we can still handle anything that comes up."
Dolphins
continued from page 1

do this in the Iraqi harbor of Umni Qasr in 20(23). The last
was in 1996 when they patrolled the bay during a
Republican convention.

Sea lions can carry in their "mouths special cuffs,
attached to long ropes. If the animal finds a nogal swim­
er, it can clamp the cuff around the person's leg. The
individual can then be reeled in for questioning.

The Navy wanted to deploy marine animals to the
Northwest in 1989, LaPuzza said, but a federal judge
ruled the plan was unconstitutional. After a few years, he
said, the Navy and the Marine Mammals Platoon of
Naval Special Operations Command were able to
deploy at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga. The
Navy has been training marine mammals since
1960s, and currently keeps about 100 dolphins and
sea lions. Most of those are in San Diego, but about 20 are
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LaPuzza said the Navy has the dolphins and sea
lions to cold-water places like Alaska and Scandinavia to
keep them cool during the summer months. The animals
are generally kept until they die of old age.

"They did very well," LaPuzza said. If the animals are
sent to Washington, the dolphins would be housed in
heated enclosures and would only be allowed out for peri­
och of about two hours.

Stephanie Boley, a marine biologist and spokeswoman
for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said sea
mammals do not provide a reliable defense system, and
they should not be kept in small enclosures.

"We believe the United States citizens deserve the
very best defense possible and this just isn't it," Boley
said, adding that dolphins are easily distracted once in
open water. "They don't understand the consequences of
what will happen if they don't carry out the mission."

Among the other options the Navy is considering for
the K-9Ban-Gangor base are the use of human interception
teams and remote-controlled machines.

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"It's a good idea to have securi­
ty toned down because last year
there were cops everywhere," he
said. "It's good to have police around because it keeps everyone under control, but it's not the very best defense possible and this just isn't it," Boley
said, adding that dolphins are easily distracted once in
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State

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police shot and killed a mentally ill man after he stabbed an officer's chest armor with a sharp object during a disturbance at a group home for the disabled, authorities said.

The man, identified as Francisco Mondragon, 24, died Sunday at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center, said Lt. Paul Vernon, a police spokesman.

Officers were called to Fair Oaks Manor around 2 a.m. Sunday after Mondragon became violent and threatened two residents and a staff member, said the facility's director, Mark Cruz.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Smoking marijuana eased HIV-related pain in some patients in a small study that nevertheless represented one of the few rigorous attempts to find out if the drug has medicinal benefits.

The Bush administration's Office of National Drug Control Policy quickly sought to shoot holes in the study.

The study, conducted at San Francisco General Hospital from 2003 to 2005 involved 50 patients suffering from HIV-related neuropathy.

National

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A couple whose home was destroyed when Hurricane Katrina ripped holes in its roof paid their premiums on time, but their insurance company failed to properly or promptly pay their claim for damages, their lawyer said on Monday.

In opening arguments for a trial that could set the tone for thousands of other cases against insurers, Chrissy Howley said Lawrence Tomlinson and his wife Elizabeth paid their premiums in a timely manner but didn't get paid for their Katrina claims until after they sued in January 2006.

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democratic leaders circulated a nonbinding resolution Monday saying that Congress "disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush ... to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq." The measure, expected to come to a vote by Friday, also says that "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States armed forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq."

International

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's hard-line president, who has berated the United States for the communist country's first round of six-party talks on the North's nuclear program.

Ahmadinejad insisted that turmoil in Iraq is bad for his country and announced that a tentative deal had been struck at the latest six-party talks on the nuclear test explosion.

The U.S. envoy to the talks, Christopher Hill, emerged in the early morning hours of Tuesday on initial steps toward North Korea's nuclear disarmament that could usher in disarmament that could usher in

BEIJING (AP) — Six countries reached a tentative agreement Tuesday on initial steps toward North Korea's nuclear disarmament that could usher in the first concrete progress after more than three years of talks marked by delays, deadlock and the communist country's first nuclear test explosion.

The U.S. envoy to the talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, emerged in the early morning hours of Tuesday looking weary after a marathon 16-hour negotiation and announced that a tentative deal had been struck at the latest round of six-party talks on the North's nuclear program.

Ryan Lent
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Soldiers spearheading the increase in U.S. forces in Baghdad are papering car windows and storefronts with purple stickers listing telephone numbers and an e-mail address where Iraqis can send intelligence tips to help stop the violence.

But if a recent sweep in search of car bomb makers is an indication, they have a long way to go to improve intelligence.

Soldiers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment converged this week on a religiously mixed north Baghdad neighborhood of auto parts stores and "chop shops" that Iraqi commanders believed was used to fuel deadly car bombs.

Moving door to door, Iraqi and U.S. soldiers smashed padlocks with sledge hammers, clipped through wire gates and rifled through hundreds of buildings in the Iraqis' mechanics, their hands slick with grease and motor oil, peered from nearby shops.

But "that's what seems to me to still be going on."

U.S. officials have urged Iraqis to be patient and have cautioned that the new security operation could take months to show results. That's a hard message to swallow for Iraqis who have endured years of violence — including a triple car-bombing Monday that killed at least 71 people in the heart of the capital.

The U.S. military has advertised some successes, including the discovery of 14 weapons caches during a series of raids and patrols in Baghdad during the week that ended last Friday. On Thursday, see Security Plan, page 4.

Instead of discovering a network of clandestine car bomb factories, the soldiers instead found only a few Kalashnikov rifles, eight grenades and some wire.

"We're told this new surge is going to be more intelligence-based instead of just hitting random sites," said Staff Sgt. Jamie Slagle, 33, of Morenoville, Mo., as he flipped through a stack of unsent stickers. "But that's what seems to me to still be going on."

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Information Meeting

February 15, 2007

2:00 - 3:00 PM

Bldg 2 Rm 204

Meeting Agenda:

- Curriculum
- Academic Credit
- Program Structures
- Student Life
- Accommodations
- Program Costs
- Questions and Answers
Security Plan
continued from page 3
U.S. and Iraqi troops arrested two members of a car bomb-making cell in Amiriya, a Sunni neighborhood near Baghdad airport, the command said.

But for the soldiers of the 23rd Regiment, the results of the new phase have been disappointing so far. Some of them fear that the delays in kicking off the new security operation may have given Sunni and Shiite extremists time to flee the capital or hide their weapons.

"Why are they sending us ground pounding?" asked Spc. Kevin Gibson, 26, of Shiloh, Ohio, as he slumped on a dusty couch in an abandoned office after a day of futile searches.

What still seems lacking, soldiers say, is good intelligence — and cooperation from Iraqis themselves.

"It's like a 50-50 game. Fifty percent is good intelligence and 50 percent is just plain bull," said Spc. Brett Rochon, 22, of Ansonia, Conn. "You’ve got a better chance of walking around the street."

Since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, U.S. military officers have been courting tribal leaders, repairing schools, clearing streets and making contacts — all with the goal of winning public support against insurgents and militias.

But transforming goodwill into usable intelligence has proven elusive. And sometimes, the insurgents have turned the tables by spreading false information under the guise of friendly tips.

Last month, U.S. troops launched a raid on Haifa Street in central Baghdad after receiving a tip that insurgents were in the area. As the Americans arrived, they were ambushed and one American was killed.

"The first target we went to, as soon as we dismounted, they started throwing grenades at my guys like they knew we were coming," said Capt. Isaac Torres, 34, of San Diego, Calif., a company commander.

"Nevertheless, the U.S. has little choice but to rely heavily on the Iraqis — both civilians and military — if it stands any chance of success in pacifying the capital. Under the new plan, Iraqi forces will take the lead in securing city neighborhoods by neighborhood — with American units standing by in case of trouble.

"We will have to share the burden and move forward together," Gen. David Petraeus said Saturday when he assumed command from Gen. George W. Casey. "If we can do that and if we can help the people of Iraq, the prospects of success are good. Failing that, Iraq will be doomed to continued violence and civil strife."

But some soldiers fear that the ranks of the Iraqi police and army are now so riddled with militias and insurgent sympathizers that the strategy may backfire.

"The new plan had the best chance of being effective two years ago. But I don’t think it has much of a chance now. It’s just too late. The militias are embedded in every neighborhood," Slagle said.

Arizona legislature to rule on driving-while-texting law

Andrea Lorch
TUCSON, Ariz. — Text-messaging while driving could become a secondary offense, complete with fines up to $200 if the Arizona state Legislature passes a bill proposed by Rep. Steve Farley, D-Tucson.

According to the bill, a driver could not only be pulled over for text-messaging while driving, but could also be fined if pulled over for another offense while text-messaging.

The fine for a driving-while-texting, or DWT, offense would be $50.

If a driver causes an accident while text-messaging, the fine would increase to $200.

According to the bill introduced by Farley Jan. 16, not only would it be illegal to compose text-messages while driving, it would also be illegal to read them while driving.

The bill does not mention talking on a cell phone while driving, or using any other cell phone function other than text-messaging.

Thirty-seven percent of people ages 27 and younger admit to text-messaging while driving, according to a study conducted by Nationwide Mutual Insurance.

Andrea Lorch, an engineering senior, said he does not text-message while driving, but even if he did, this bill would not make him stop.

"You would have to be an idiot to hold your phone in front of your face while you’re driving," Lewis said. "How would they even know that you are texting? ... I’ve seen girls put on makeup, read a newspaper and drive at the same time. I’m sure there are a lot worse things you could do while driving."

Some students admit to text-messaging while driving.

"All you have to do is hold your phone down low, so they don’t see," said Sarah Merkle, a psychology senior. "I feel like this bill is pointless because how are police going to know you are texting? But it’s a good idea."

Morgan Lor, an engineering management sophomore, said he text-messages while driving but thinks it’s very dangerous.

"I don’t think that law can be enforced, but I think it’s a good idea because people who text and drive are horrible drivers," Lor said.

Nicole Hauptman, a psychology senior, said if the bill is passed, she might stop text-messaging while driving when streets are really busy, but not if there isn’t much traffic.

"I text-message while driving but I probably shouldn’t because it is distracting," she said.

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Wear your PJ's and receive a 30% discount on all:

- Regular priced Cal Poly clothing & gifts
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- Seasonal promotional gifts including:
  - Valentines
  - Greeting Cards
  - Stationery
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  - Art
  - Office
  - School

El Corral Bookstore
A nonprofit organization serving Cal Poly since 1933
www.elcorralbookstore.com
The show was a hit. It was the perfect moment for Kyle Field to showcase his talent and connect with his fans. The response was overwhelming. People were sipping coffee, sharing cigarettes, and enjoying the beautiful, lonely, wandering folk music. Kyle Field's performance that night was a turning point in his career. He received a devoted fan base and saw his career take off. The night is now referred to as "The Night That Changed Everything."
Poly DanceSport founder having a 'ball'

Janelle Eastridge

It is 11 a.m. on Saturday, an hour before the first dance of the day begins. Outside the rain is pouring down, but inside, doors to compete ballroom dancers carefully apply makeup, secure hair, and change into elaborate, sequined and bead-adorned dresses and tuxedos — or jeans and T-shirts.

On the dance floor, couples are practicing intricate steps, warming up for their dances. In the background, Michael Budil's "Feeling Good," Norah Jones "Come Away With Me," and Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud" play as couples glide gracefully across the floor.

In the midst of the mild chaos, Christopher Ellwood busily rushes around, practicing for one of his 32 dances and hammering out last-minute details before the competition actually begins.

Ellwood's dream of hosting a ballroom dancing event in San Luis Obispo finally became a reality this weekend as Cal Poly hosted its first-ever Mustang Ball.

The event was held in Chumash Auditorium Saturday, with members of the Red Hat Society, proud alumni of Intro to Hatha Yoga, and Oklahomans all stopping by to watch the showdown.

Since most schools and studios generally only compete in their region (i.e. Northern or Southern California), it has been Ellwood's hope that, by hosting a competition in Central California, that gap would be bridged.

"We're a common meeting point for everyone to dance and compete against people they wouldn't normally compete against," he said.

This year's Mustang Ball, hopefully the first of many, has been about a year and a half in the making, but still didn't progress further this time.

Though still considered a club, ASI has not yet labeled the team with "sports" status. As the team anxiously awaits this status, Ellwood hopes that this ongoing, frustrating process will end soon.

Since Ellwood first joined the team, there has been talk about hosting a competition at Cal Poly, until this year, though, the idea had languished. This year's Mustang Ball, however, has been "carefully thought out," said Ellwood.

The first thing that Ellwood did was to talk to a judge about being the first to host a competition in San Luis Obispo. The judge was enthusiastic and willing to come and judge for Ellwood's club.

"What made all the planning and hard work worth it was seeing everyone having such a good time," he said. "People were enjoying watching. People enjoyed dancing. And that made everything worthwhile." So far, so good, said Ellwood. The money will go towards the production of the magazine. In previous years, (the Byzantium staff) had to raise about $8,000 to produce the book, so we're hoping to get in as many donations as we can," Bailey said.

Committees comprised of faculty members blindly judge the poems, and decide on first, second and third place winners, all along with one honorific mention for each type of work. These eight pieces were then printed in the magazine, which is published monthly.

The magazine is run by undergraduate students, and co-edited by two senior English majors, who worked for months on the magazine in a senior project. Besides Bailey, this year's issue is co-edited by David Schwartz, also accompanied by the student art director, Julian Castruita.

Byzantium has won numerous literary awards and is sold at the El Corral Bookstore.
Chicks rule at Grammys, multiple veterans snag trophies

Nekea Mamuti Moody
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Without "American Idol" to worry about, the Grammy Awards bounced back strongly in the ratings this year. An estimated 20.1 million people watched the Dixie Chicks take home every trophy they were eligible for, Sunday night. That's up 18 percent from last season, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Last year Grammy organizers decided to go head-to-head with "American Idol" on a Wednesday night and were clobbered; the telecast's 17 million viewers represented the smallest audience in the shows' eight-year history.

This year the Grammys moved back to Sunday night. The show even gave a nod of respect to "American Idol" by holding a contest where an amateur singer had a spotlight duet with Justin Timberlake.

The Recording Academy embraced more serious fare by veteran performers. For the first time in Grammy history, the show featured a medley from the Eagles' "Take It Easy" and "Desperado," from "The Partridge Family" and Fleetwood Mac's "Rhiannon." The Red Hot Chili Peppers contributed to the evening's biggest hit, "Give it All to Me," performed by Wonder.

Pharrell Williams won three for his comeback album, including the rare feat of record, album, and song of the year. For "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned by songwriter Dan Wilson, it was sweet vindication after the Chicks were nominated for. Williams was nominated for multiple categories.

"(Baby) I'm Coming Home," from the soundtrack for "American Idol," was Hands Across America's only hit of the year. The anthem's message was sweet vindication after the Chicks were nominated for. Williams was nominated for multiple categories.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including albums of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Ready to Roll," which was "designed for the car," according to a chiptune artist. The Chicks' "Ready to Roll" was nominated for song of the year.

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TODAY'S ONLINE EXCLUSIVE COLUMN

HUMOR COLUMN

Write your own Valentine's Day poem

See what I did there? I gave a compliment, and then followed it up with even more constructive criticism. Everyone wins with haikus like that. Here is another for the sake of really making sure you get these:

"You don't need makeup, you are so pretty, it's unbelievable. You don't need five hours for prep, some things can't be fixed."

2 Just looking out for all you fellow Jews.
4 "You don't need makeup, you are so pretty, it's unbelievable. You don't need five hours for prep, some things can't be fixed." see what I did there? I gave a compliment, and then followed it up with even more constructive criticism. Everyone wins with haikus like that. Here is another for the sake of really making sure you get these:

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Football

continued from page 12

James Noble ran for 1,009 yards and seven scores. The Walter Payton Award candidate became the first player in school history to surpass 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons, rushed for a school-record 1,578 yards in 2006 and averaged 5.1 yards per carry in 2006.

In addition to the 5-6, 180-pound Noble, another junior-to-be, Fred Hives II, ran for 221 yards and two scores last year. The 210-pounder averaged 5.7 yards per carry and provided an effective, bigger change-of-pace back to the shifter Noble. Hives II also played some fullback.

Mole is not the only former Righetti skilled-position star who will get some reps when Cal Poly begins spring practice Feb. 21.

Cal Poly announced in December that it had signed former Righetti and Hancock quarterback Jonathan Daly.

Aside from Mole and Daly, the Mustangs’ recruiting class is high­lighted by versatility.

Greg Francis, a 6-1, 180-pound cornerback/free safety from La Habra, returned two kicks, two interceptions and one punt for scores last season. He made 85 tackles and picked off six passes as a high school senior.

Joshua Houston, a 5-10, 175-pound tailback/defensive back from Fairfield, brought back two punts for loss as a senior at Los Pueblos High in Goleta — where both his older brothers went.

“We believe in that gene pool,” Ellerson said.

Ellerson, though, said that Troy Shortwell was signed for reasons greater than his relation to two of the team’s top defensive playmakers in 2006.

“I’m excited about what (Troy Shortwell) future holds,” Ellerson said. “He’s a good player and athlete in his own right.”

The recruiting class also includes three San Luis Obispo County products — linebacker/backup Brandon Roberts and kicker Jacob West of Atascadero along with safety/wingback Jake Romanelli of Templeton.

Ellerson said the likely reason Francis and Houston served as return men at their respective high schools was because their coaches probably trusted them with the ball in their hands, a sign he’d encourage by watching at their prospects transitioning to the NCAA Division I-AA level.

“They both have those kind of ball skills that tell you they can play,” Ellerson said. “I love guys on defense that can catch the ball.”

Another prominent aspect of the recruiting class is Troy Shortwell, the younger brother of Buck Buchanan Award-winning line­backer Kyle Shortwell and sophomore-to-be defensive end Ryan Shortwell.

Troy Shortwell, a 6-3, 200-pound defensive end/tight end, will likely see more time on the defensive side of the ball. That’s where he racked up 86 tackles, 13 sacks and 21 tackles for loss as a senior at Dos Pueblos High in Goleta — where both his older brothers went.

“Young sibling (Ryan) and older brother (Kyle) went. That’s his kind of family he comes from, his fits so well here.”

Other players the Mustangs signed include defensive linemen Matthew Duffy (El Segundo) and Erich Klemme (Long Beach), offen­sive/defensive lineman Stash McGuinness (Pleasanton), defensive back Angel Morales (Ventura), receiver/DB John Yesner (El Segundo) and running back/line­backer Jordan Yocum (Anaheim).

Roberts, a second-team all-state pick by CalHiSports.com, was the PAC 7 League MVP this past season in leading the 9-2 Greyhounds to their first league title since 1997. He had 54 tackles, one sack and one interception — returned for a touchdown — this past season. He also converted six of his 24 recep­tions into TDs and ran for five more scores out of the backfield.

The 6-2, 190-pound Romanelli had 97 tackles, one interception, three forced fumbles, one fumble recovery and a sack this past season. He also accumulated 1,136 yards from scrimmage and nine touch­downs and averaged 8.4 yards per carry out of the backfield as a senior for the 7-4 Eagles.

“We know our area pretty well,” Ellerson said. “We really like Jake (Romanelli), known about him for a while. He was probably the heavi­est-recruited guy in our area. I also felt like the kind of student he was, the kind of family he comes from, his fits so well here.”

Other players the Mustangs signed include defensive linemen Matthew Duffy (El Segundo) and Erich Klemme (Long Beach), offen­sive/defensive lineman Stash McGuinness (Pleasanton), defensive back Angel Morales (Ventura), receiver/DB John Yesner (El Segundo) and running back/line­backer Jordan Yocum (Anaheim).

Ruark

continued from page 12

not make it back for this season, in an attempt to compete in the 2008 Olympics.

“Depending on how things go there I might keep training, but my body is getting beat up so we’ll have to see,” he said.

Ruark started pole vaulting in high school and entered Long Beach State ranked eighth among all college freshmen.

He transferred to Cal Poly the following year and redshirted the season.

The accounting and finance stu­dent could have graduated last year, but still had one year of eligibility. “I’ll be very disappointed if I can’t compete,” Ruark said. “That’s the only reason I didn’t graduate.”

Nunno said that Ruark will be missed at the meets he is unable to attend.

“Not only are we losing a pole vaulter, but we’re losing a big part of our scoring section,” Nunno said. “He’s a good team motivator.”
Schottenheimer continued on page 12
Running backs coach Clarence Shelton, who's never been a coordi­nator, was pointedly replaced. Cameron: Shelton accepted only a one-year contract due to what had been his Schottenheimer's lame-duck status.

The next day, the 24-21 playoff loss to New England, Schottenheimer declined the team's offer of a $4.5 million, one-year extension through 2008, which came with a club option of $1 million. Spring and Smith seemed visibly angry that the coach turned them down.

Schottenheimer has been at odds with Smith since the 2005 season, apparently over personnel decisions.

With a regular-season record of 200-126-1 with Cleveland, Kansas City, Washington and San Diego, Schottenheimer is the most successful coach never to have reached the Super Bowl.

His 5-13 playoff record has taken on a life of its own. The loss to the Patriots was his sixth straight in the postseason dating to 1995, and the ninth time a Schottenheimer-coached team lost its opening playoff game. His teams have failed four times to capitalize on the home-field advantage that comes with owning the AFC's No. 1 seed. He was 47-33 in five seasons with the Chargers, including 35 wins and two AFC West titles in the last three seasons.

Wild Pitch
continued from page 12
West — Cal State Fullerton (18-5) and Long Beach State (17-6) — are ranked 15th and 16th, respectively, in CollegeInsider.com's Mid­ Major Poll.

But behind all these numbers is a greater reason why the Big West deserves more credit — Bobby Brown. Cal State Fullerton's standout senior point guard, is widely projected to be a second­ round NBA draft pick in June. The finalist for the Bob Cousy Award — presented to the nation's top point guard — averages 19.4 points and 5.5 assists per game. He poured in 47 points in a 94-65 rout of Bethune-Cookman on Dec. 16.

And the Big West sending players to the NBA is hardly something new.

Present or former NBA players from current Big West schools include Bruce Bowen and Cedric Ceballos (Cal State Fullerton), Jamal Crawford and Brandon Roy (Long Beach State), Brian Shaw (UC Santa Barbara) and Michael Jordan (Cal State Fullerton).

It was not long ago that Cal Poly beat two Pac-10 schools in the same season. In the 2003-04 cam­ paign, the Mustangs won at Cal (63-62) and at USC (93-78).

Sure, the Big West is not the Pac­10 or Atlantic Conference Coast. But when mid­majors are dis­cussed, it deserves to be near the top of the list.

Poly junior guard
Whitten named
Big West Co­POW

Dawin Whiten tied a school record with eight 3-pointers and scored a career-high 31 points in a win over UC Irvine on Saturday.

Whiten earned the honor when he scored a career-high 31 points and tied a school record with eight 3-pointers in leading the Mustangs to a 90-80 win over UC Irvine.

Whiten received the honor despite playing only one game this week. Whiten was sidelined with an injury for Friday's game.

The native of North Hills scored his points by making 9 of 13 shots from the floor and 8 of 11 from the arc.

The junior also made 5 of 7 from the line.

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Chargers zap Marty as head coach

Monday night’s firing of San Diego’s head coach surprised many; irreconcilable differences between Marty Schottenheimer and GM A.J. Smith are cited as grounds for the dismissal.

Bernie Wilson

SAN DIEGO — Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer was fired Monday night in a shocking move by team president Dean Spanos, who cited a “dysfunctional situation” between the coach and general manager A.J. Smith.

Less than a month after San Diego’s NFL-best 14-2 was wrecked in a home playoff loss to New England, Spanos cited the exodus of both coordinators and other assistants in firing Schottenheimer. The coach had a year left on his contract and will be owed more than $3 million.

“When I decided to move ahead with Marty Schottenheimer in mid-January, I did so with the expectation that the core of his first coaching staff would remain intact,” Spanos said in a statement. “Unfortunately, that did not prove to be the case, and the process of dealing with these coaching changes convinced me that we simply could not move forward with such dysfunction between our head coach and general management.

“In short, this entire process over the last month convinced me beyond any doubt that I had to act to change this unsustainable situation and create a foundation for all.”

The firing was first reported by ESPN.

Schottenheimer didn’t immediately return messages left on his office and cell phones.

“This decision was so hard because Marty has been both a friend and valued coach of ours,” Spanos said. “Our first obligation is always to do what is in the best interest of our fans and the entire Charger organization. I must take whatever steps are necessary to deliver a Super Bowl trophy to San Diego. Events of the last month have now convinced me that it is not possible for our organization to function at a championship level under the current structure.

“On the contrary, and in the plainest possible language, we have a dysfunctional situation here. Today I am resolving that situation once and for all.”

Defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was hired as head coach of the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday, following offensive coordinator Cam Cameron and two other assistants out of town for better jobs.

Although Schottenheimer said last week that change was inevitable, Smith sounded concerned saying, “Both in the same year — Wow.”

Tight ends coach Rob Chudzinski became Cleveland’s offensive coordinator, and linebackers coach Greg Manusky was hired as San Francisco’s defensive coordinator.

see Schottenheimer, page 11

Poly’s Ruark hopes to vault back into fray

The standout pole vaulter was ranked 15th nationally in the event before suffering a variety of injuries to his left ankle.

Samantha Freitas

MUSTANG DAILY

Cal Poly senior Adrian Ruark competes in the pole vault.

The Mustangs announced their signing last Wednesday. Ellison said the lone player he hopes can have an immediate impact is Ryan Moe, a tailback who played two seasons at Sacramento State before transferring to Allan Hancock College and now Cal Poly.

“I would think Ryan has the best chance to step in and be in the mix,” Ellison said Monday. “The freshmen, frankly, have to have some extraordinary ability to be on the cup of getting some playing time. We have that every year, with the absence of some catastrophic injury. It’s better for their adjustment to college. It’s a real boon for them if they not have to play in their first year. Inevitably, one or two of them are going to find themselves in the mix.”

Ruark’s doctors do not yet know if he will need surgery or how long his recovery process will be, although he is hoping to return to pole vaulting by April.

“March is all entry-level meets that I can afford to miss,” Ruark said. “April is the month with all the biggest meets. If I miss those, it’s going to be a challenge to get back.”

Ruark did not qualify for nationals last year despite vaulting 17 feet, 3 inches and placing first at the conference meet.

“My first year at Cal Poly, I placed eighth at regionals and missed nationals by one spot; last year I got ninth and missed nationals by one spot. This year I was hoping to not miss nationals by one spot.”

Ruark’s injured leg has already lost considerable strength, but he is trying to remain in shape by working his upper body while his ankle recovers.

“He’s been working out really hard and doing everything he can to keep in shape for vaulting,” Nuñno said. “When the doctor gives him the OK, he won’t be starting from scratch.”

Ruark added, “Pole vaulting requires strength and speed. You need the whole package or it doesn’t work.”

Ruark will continue to train through next year, even if he does.

see Ruark, page 10

Mustang football recruits versatile, but most will redshirt, Ellison says

Having won 32 of its last 46 games, Cal Poly typically redshirts the majority of its incoming freshmen.

Tristan Aird

MUSTANG DAILY

As promising and versatile as the Cal Poly football program’s recruiting class is, head coach Rich Ellison hopes his team does not have to rely too heavily next season on its 14 incoming players.

The Mustangs announced their signee just last Wednesday. Ellison said the lone player he hopes can

Putting the ‘Big’ in Big West

T he Big West Conference teams are not only a basketball than some might think.

Here are the numbers to prove it:

• The eight Big West teams have combined for an 11-1 record against West Coast Conference teams this season. Somehow, the WCC is still ranked fourth in the nation — at No. 12 — than Cal Poly (No. 16) among 32 Division I conferences in USA Today’s Jeff Sagarin ratings.

• Big West teams have combined for winning records against the following conferences: Atlantic East (1-0), Big Sky (6-3), Ivy (1-0), Metro Atlantic (1-0), Mid-Continent (1-0), Mid-Eastern (1-0), Southeastern (1-0), Southland (3-2) and West Coast (11-4).

That’s right, there is a win in there against a SEC team. UC Irvine, which Cal Poly shot past 89-80 Saturday, dismantled visiting South Carolina (12-11) — a team that was 8-2 against SEC schools.

The reason the Big West is stacked at No. 16 in the Sagarin ratings could partly be because it is tied for the fewest teams in its domain (eight).

Still, it is inexplicable for the Big West to be ranked four conferences lower than the WCC — which also has eight teams — when it has won 11 of 17 games played between the two conferences this season.

Granted, Big West teams are 0-8 against the Pac-10 and the Big Ten.

But don’t let ESPN or USA Today fool you — the Pac-10 is under the best conference in the nation.

And when looking at that 0-8 mark, you must consider that three of the Big West’s losses came at fifth-ranked UCLA. Not to mention, Cal State Northridge only lost 84-73 at No. 15 Oregon and UC Davis — which will join the Big West next season — only fell 84-72 at Stanford.

The top two teams in the Big West Conference will play basketball for the first time since 1946, but there’s still some hope.