

Alexander aiming to make a difference

by ROBERT MACK

Chadwick's new girls' basketball assistant coach, Moniquee Alexander, has her sights set on educating and changing the lives of young women. Her players look at her with fondness for her large personality, her insistence on strong rebounding, and her passionate philosophizing on basketball as an allegory for life.

"A lot of times in life you'll win, and a lot of times you'll lose," Alexander said. "So how you respond is what really defines you."

Originally from nearby Harbor City, the 6-foot-6 Alexander attended Narbonne High and finished at the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla. She played basketball and graduated with a degree in sociology from UCLA in 2010.

Alexander then launched her professional basketball career

and traveled the globe, playing for teams in Romania, Thailand, Panama City, Poland and, most recently, Turkey.

Those four years of hard-core hoops and traveling took their toll. "I was playing overseas, though it wasn't going so well," she said.

While still abroad, one of her coaches told her about an opening at a small, private high school in the Palos Verdes Peninsula that was looking for a girls' basketball coach. Seeking a new path in life, Alexander applied for and got the job at Chadwick. She is ecstatic about being here.

"This is a very prestigious school," Alexander said. Happy to be coaching kids she considers to be at a very high level, Alexander is "proud to be a Dolphin." Still, she hasn't set out to be a typical coach at a high-profile school. "I

take the time to go out and get to know the girls because when I was in high school, coaches didn't take the time to get to know me as an individual," she said.

Alexander has high hopes for a strong season. "Things can get a little tight at Chadwick, academically and socially," she said. "I hope basketball can be that outlet."

So far, Alexander is "very pleased" with her players, including those in Middle School.

"The growth that I've seen in my players, on and off the court, has let me know this is too legit to leave," she said.

Alexander looks forward to turning the Chadwick girls' basketball program around. In the future, she wants to continue motivating young women. She is currently back at UCLA, working on a master's degree to be a marriage and

family therapist. While she sees herself still coaching basketball in the future, Alexander's work will likely extend beyond sports and into the nonprofit sector.

"When I was 11, my mother died of breast cancer," she said. "I had a counselor named Amy. She really impacted my life in terms of dealing with death and loss of my mother. You never really get over it, but you learn to live with it."

Within the next few years, Alexander hopes to start a nonprofit organization that helps young women in sports and other areas of life—just as Amy, the counselor, helped her.

Indeed, Alexander's benevolent nature shines throughout. When you first walk up to meet her, she'll stick her hand out politely and say in a surprisingly genuine voice, "Hi, [I'm] Moniquee."



Heisman Hype

by MARY DAWSON

Big things are taking place these days at the University of Oregon. In addition to the school's No. 2 national ranking in football, Oregon is now home to its first Heisman Trophy recipient. Last Saturday, quarterback Marcus Mariota, the Ducks' outstanding junior quarterback, won the prestigious award as the best player this season in college football.

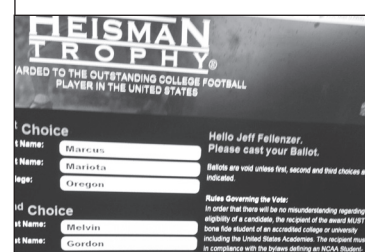
Mariota's victory is a first on many levels. It's the first time the award has gone to a West Coast player that wasn't from USC since 1970. That year, the winner was Stanford quarterback Jim Plunkett. Mariota almost broke the record for the largest margin of victory in Heisman history. His name appeared on 90.9% of the ballots, putting him only slightly behind the 2006 winner from Ohio State, quarterback Troy Smith, whose name appeared on 91.63% of the ballots.

Even before the announcement of the winner, it was clear how popular Mariota is. During the week leading up to the Heisman announcement, Mariota made it a clean sweep of the major college football honors, earning the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award, the Davey O'Brien quarterback of the year, and the Walter Camp and Maxwell awards for player of the year. It turned out to be the perfect end to Mariota's week on Saturday when he was selected winner of the 80th Heisman Trophy.

The Heisman Trust describes the award as one that's given to "the outstanding college football player whose performance best exhibits the pursuit of excellence with integrity." Going along the lines of this criteria, it makes sense that a player such as Marcus Mariota would be the best candidate for this award. But keep in mind that no one knows what the future holds for this Heisman winner. It could be greatness or it could backfire in the face of the Heisman organization.

Remember the winner from last year, Florida State quarterback Jameis Winston? Yes, he still has a "performance best exhibiting excellence," a.k.a. he does a decent job at quarterback. However, what about the part that includes excellence with integrity?

How much integrity does a player have after doing something as foolish as stealing crab legs? How much integrity does a player have left after being investigated for sexual assault?



COURTESY OF JEFF FELLENER

The official Heisman ballot sent by our Mainsheet faculty advisor.



STAFF PHOTOS

New girls' basketball assistant coach Moniquee Alexander, above, has a towering presence on the court. Alexander enjoys teaching her players about the finer points of the game, including the proper defensive stance, above right, along with life lessons off the court as she pursues a master's degree at UCLA.

Gervais puts her own stamp on soccer

by MARIE BUCKLIN

Chadwick alum Nicole Gervais, class of 1997, is back at her alma mater as the head girls' soccer coach.

Gervais actually returned to Chadwick last year to be an assistant girls' soccer and softball coach. She was promoted this year to head girls' soccer coach for both the high school varsity and Middle School, and still serves as an assistant coach for the varsity softball team.

Gervais graduated from Chadwick after starting school here in the sixth grade. She went on to play soccer at Principia College in Elmhurst, Ill., then started her coaching career. Gervais continued to play recreational soccer up until about a year ago, finally stopping due to her busy schedule.

Gervais played the center back position on her club soccer team. At Chadwick, she played every position except goalkeeper. At Principia, Gervais played as a forward until her senior year, when she switched to her favorite position of attacking midfielder.

Gervais enjoys the attacking midfielder position because "you get to be in charge, you get to score a lot, and you get to make great passes for other people to be able to score. Assists are my favorite thing. It's great. You don't have



STAFF PHOTO

Girls' soccer Coach Nicole Gervais spends a teachable moment at practice.

to stand and watch; you get to be involved with everything," Gervais said.

Gervais has coached soccer for 18 years and at every level of the coaching spectrum, from preschool to college. After Gervais graduated from Principia, she went on to coach at her alma mater as an assistant for five years. Later she became the head girls' soccer coach at Whittier College for five years.

Currently, alongside her coaching jobs at Chadwick, Gervais works in the fall as a coach for the El Camino College women's soccer team, along with having a full-time

job at Trader Joe's.

Gervais is happy to be back to Chadwick. "It is definitely nice to be back. It's nice because you know the community and you know how things work," she said.

Chadwick Athletic Director Tom Goodspeed is pleased to bring another alum back to Chadwick to coach.

"I love that, I look for that. In Nicole's case, she has college playing experience, college coaching experience and she is a Chadwick graduate, so she knows the ropes here and she knows what it takes to play at that next level. So it's perfect," he said. "I love her phi-

losophy and I love what she does. I listen and watch her coach and she is positive, constructive. I think she is amazing."

Gervais was an assistant coach to Nate Northup last year at Chadwick. She is looking to make some changes in the program.

"I think that Nate and I saw the game very similarly," Gervais said. "I think the only difference would be sometimes how we portray the game is different. Sometimes I deal with things slightly differently. I really want to do more with team bonding and cohesiveness on and off the field. As staff last year, we didn't stress about it [bonding and cohesiveness]. So I want to change that."

Gervais hopes to implement her own coaching style to Chadwick's soccer program.

"I want everyone to work hard all the time and things to fall into place," she said.

"I want us to work as a team. Great things happen on the field when you have individual efforts, but that doesn't mean the game is based upon individual efforts. I like to get everyone involved. I like everyone to play offense and play defense and just work together."

"Ultimately, it is my favorite thing to do, so I want other people to enjoy and love it [soccer] too," Gervais said.