

2018 Daily Scholarship Essay

Awardee Luke VanKeersbilck, graduate of Adolfo Camarillo High School
Class of 2018, will attend California Lutheran University, fall of 2019

A History of the Camarillo High School Track

The Adolfo Camarillo High School track has a long history of great running and a wealth of great stories. The first track at Camarillo High School was a dirt track that was installed in 1956 when the school was built. The first all-weather track was installed in the fall and into the winter of 1956. The new track was made out of rubber and converted the old 440 yards track to a 400 meter track. This track became the first all-weather track in the county.

The track was made possible through the tireless devotion of Roger Curry, whose daughter ran on the track team. He spearheaded the fundraising for the track. In order to pay for the track, he secured corporate donations selling the track by lanes. For a certain amount of money, a corporation was able to buy a lane and have their name on it. This new track made Camarillo a hot spot for the best running in the county because the track surface was far superior to the dirt tracks in the rest of the county. Camarillo held the Ventura County Championships for Track and Field for the next ten years.

The next big change to the track came in 2001 when it was resurfaced and took on its unique blue color. This resurfacing came with money from Jack Poe, the President of the Semtech Corporation, who had a son who ran on the track team. He generously gave the Oxnard Union High School District stock in Semtech to be used to pay for a new track. Due to a delay in starting the project, by the time the money was needed the stocks had matured and the extra money was used to redo the entire stadium. In the early years seagulls thought the track was water and would crash into the blue surface!

The track has been home to some great runners over the years. One such runner was Bob Schul who, while stationed at Oxnard Air Force Base, would jump the fence to use the track to train on. He and Bill Dellinger used the track to train for the 500m at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. Bob won Gold in that race, and Bill clinched Bronze.

Another notable athlete who trained on the Camarillo HS track was Marla Runyan who attended the school and went on to become a great athlete. She won four Gold medals at the 1992 Summer Paralympics in the long jump and the 100, 200, and 400 meter races. She later placed eighth in the 1,500m in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, making Runyan the first legally blind athlete to compete in the Olympics, and the highest finish by an American woman in that event.

Eric Reynolds was one of Camarillo High School's all-time greatest athletes. He ran an 8:44 in the 3200m, the fifth fastest time ever by a high school runner.

At the Camarillo Classic Distance Relays, Jordan Hasay clocked a 10:04 3200m, the fastest time ever run by a sophomore girl. A special award was given to her by a national high school record holder in the 3200m, Kim Mortenson. Hasay has gone on to become a world class runner. She recently placed third in the 2017 Boston Marathon.

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Another professional runner also competed at the Invitational. Duane Solomon ran a sizzling 1:51 split in a 4x800m relay. He went on to finish fourth in the 2012 Olympic 800m.

The track has also been home to special moments for many young athletes in the community. The Camarillo Cosmos Youth Track Club has been practicing and racing at Camarillo High School since 1976. The Camarillo Rotary Hap Rapp Memorial Track Meet has also been held at Camarillo HS. since 1959. Both organizations have a long history of inspiring young people to pursue sports and helping to inspire kids.

I have an intimate history with the track at Camarillo HS because I ran Cosmos for many years and have run on the track team at Camarillo for four years.. I felt strongly enough about the importance of the track that two years ago I led the effort to have the district resurface the track. The long and laborious process ended in the summer of 2017 when the track was resurfaced.

This track and the track program has helped shape thousands of youth over the years and has helped teach discipline, hard work, and respect.

This essay was written with information from interviews with Charles Carranza, Ken Gerry, Mike Smith and Tom Trumpler. These men have all been influential in the story of the evolution of the track and the track team at Camarillo High School.