

TRI-COUNTY ATHLETIC LEAGUE

# Salinas: Cowboys hope to have success from hello

Rarely has a team had less to play for and more to lose than this year's Salinas High Cowboys.

They can only hope the worst is over. Salinas suffered through one of the most troubling and embarrassing seasons of any high school team in the history of Monterey County last year. The list of infractions included such things as sportsmanship issues, an unauthorized television commercials and more than anything, false addresses.

Salinas High has since tightened procedures on its eligibility forms. But its best protection of all may be to paraphrase Jerry Maguire and shout, "Show me the address!" The on- and off-field problems led to a constant struggle between Salinas High administrators and Central Coast Section officials — the group that makes the policy and enforces the rules for every school between San Francisco and King City.

The CCS ultimately lowered the boom on the Cowboys, handing out the harshest penalties in its history. Football was hit the hardest. While every sport on campus was barred from the playoffs and placed on probation for one year (the one-year ban ends in November), the football team received a two-year ban on playoffs. If the penalty sticks, Salinas won't be eligible for a CCS playoff game until 2008.

In the wake of the ongoing investigation by school officials, Salinas football coach **Mark Inrside** and his top assistants all resigned.

It wasn't until late April that **Steve Goodbody** from Idaho was hired as the football coach to clean up the mess. As far as Goodbody is concerned, the past is buried.

"It's really a non-issue," Goodbody said

**A COWBOYS PRODUCTION**

**WATKINS WRAP:** The future looks promising for the Cowboys. ☆☆☆

**Selected showtimes**

■ Sept. 2: At Scotts Valley, 2	■ Oct. 13: Alvarez, 7:30
■ Sept. 15: King City, 7:30	■ Oct. 20: At Pacific Grove, 7:30
■ Sept. 22: Mitty, 7:30	■ Oct. 27: North Salinas, 7:30
■ Sept. 29: At Gilroy, 7:30	■ Nov. 3: At Hollister, 7:30
■ Oct. 6: Palma (Sports Complex), 7:30	■ Nov. 9: Alisal, 7:30

of last year's controversy. "No one talks about it. The kids are responding like it's a normal football team."

In an effort to return things to normal, the Cowboys will play for the love of the game rather than the playoffs.

"Each kid who suits up enjoys playing football," Goodbody said. "And to play football you have to be competitive."

While Salinas may not be headed to the playoffs, most games promise to bring a playoff-type atmosphere.

Goodbody has spruced up the game-day scenery with banners and flags, and in the cozy confines of Salinas High Stadium with its near-capacity crowds, band and cheerleaders it just might appear that little has changed.

You could already say that, actually. More than 160 players turned out for the three teams. The Salinas varsity could carry as many as 60 players, making it quite possibly the largest in the league.

Double-threat **James Coon**, who rushed for 240 yards last year and has an arm good enough to be the ace of the Cowboy baseball team in the spring, is expected to quarterback.

The Cowboys also have the leading T-CAL returning rusher in bruising **Andrew Russo** (5-11, 210), who rushed for 713 yards and six touchdowns.

Topping the defense is returning first-

team free safety **Micah Wilson** (6-2, 210).

Goodbody said the Cowboys will average about 230 pounds on the offensive line with the likes of **Nathan Hoag** and **Ryan Baker**, both of whom tip the scales at about 250.

Place-kicker **Chris Pinto** gives Salinas one of the strongest and most accurate legs in the CCS. He nailed three field goals from 40 yards last year.

This is going to be a critical year in many ways for the Cowboys.

Not only were there the troubles of last year, but CCS officials also took in consideration of the problems the team has been involved in from as far back as three years ago.

However, should Salinas coast through this year without any problems there's always a chance it could get its post-season ban reduced by maybe a year.

"We have a certain philosophy and we're going to stick with it," Goodbody said. "We're going to measure success by academics and citizenship."

**DELUXE WIDESCREEN PRESENTATION**

## Jerry Maguire



League play opens Sept. 29!

"Cowboy power strong as oak!"

SALINAS HIGH SCHOOL FILM GROUP PRESENTS  
A COWBOYS PRODUCTIONS FILM  
STARRING MICAH WILSON WITH ANDREW RUSSO  
DIRECTED BY STEVE GOODBODY

MONTEREY BAY LEAGUE

# Monte Vista Christian: Can it control high ground?

During their initial three years in the Monterey Bay League the Monte Vista Christian Mustangs were an easy mark for just about everyone.

They went 18 games without a win from late 2002 — Monte Vista Christian's first year in the MBL — to early 2005.

In 2004, the Mustangs went 0-10 and gave up more than 263 points than they scored.

But these days Monte Vista Christian seems to have the right stuff to turn things around.

Hoping to build on last year's momentum, the Mustangs have big things planned for 2006.

Not only will the team fly to Washington to play in one of five games today at Huskies Stadium on the University of Washington campus, but a week later, history will be made when the first night game ever played at Monte Vista Christian will be played.

Granite Construction has donated portable lights for the Mustangs' home opener Sept. 15 against Stevenson, its first ever under the lights at

**AN MVC MUSTANGS PRODUCTION**

**WATKINS WRAP:** It may take more than a strong passing game for Monte Vista to be successful. ☆☆☆

**Selected showtimes**

■ Sept. 2: Carmel, 2	■ Sept. 30: Harbor, 2
■ Sept. 8: At Kent-Meridian (Wash.), 7:30	■ Oct. 13: At Monterey
■ Sept. 15: Stevenson, 7:30	■ Oct. 21: Seaside, 2
■ Sept. 22: At James Lick (San Jose), 2	■ Oct. 28: Pajaro Valley, 2
	■ Nov. 3: At Watsonville, 7:30
	■ Nov. 11: At North County, 2

home. "Hopefully parents can see how awesome it is to play Friday nights at home, and it can help lead us to getting permanent lights," Monte Vista's second-year coach **Andre Dobson** said.

The Mustangs lit up the sky last year by becoming one of the most prolific passing teams in the area.

Monte Vista led the tri-league area in passing with more than 2,000 yards. That's no small feat considering it threw for only 67 yards in the

first game. Three Mustang receivers ended the year with 20 catches or more.

For a team that scored 111 points in 2004, the new-look Mustangs scored 30 or more points in a game three times last year.

Monte Vista finished 3-7 overall, 1-4 in league and relished every victory. "We had some seniors who had never won a high school game in their career until last year," Dobson said.

And even though nearly every key

offensive player from last year is gone, Dobson hinted that fact actually is part of the grand plan.

"We held back quite a few juniors," Dobson said. "We wanted to keep them together. This year they'll be stepping up."

The Mustang JV's went 8-2 and were about five points shy of a perfect season.

Replacing 2,000-yard passer **Trevin Kent** is **Collin Hogan**, a 6-foot, 180-pounder, voted team captain.

"Collin is a little flashier than Trevin," Dobson said. "He can run." The new wave of receivers, much like every other position, will come from last year's JV squad.

The list includes **Ryan Vandenhuevel**, a 6-1, 185-pound junior, as the tight end.

But the Mustangs won't be one-dimensional. Even last year, they found time to run for more than 1,000 yards.

This year, speedster **Logan Wade** will lead the running backs. He clocked the second-fastest time at the **Herman Edwards** football camp in July.

In addition, Monte Vista's No. 2 rusher last year, **Neil Stokel** with 345 yards, returns.

**James Snodgrass**, a 6-2, 225-pound senior, tackle, and center **Jeff Griffin** return to the offensive line.

The defensive roster, said Dobson, will be heavily populated by juniors. "We wanted those guys (junior varsity players), to have a good time playing and learn how to win," Dobson said. "We're very excited with what's going on with our program."

**"The Right Stuff"**

MONTE VISTA CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL FILM GROUP PRESENTS  
AN MVC MUSTANGS PRODUCTIONS FILM  
STARRING COLLIN HAGEN WITH LOGAN WADE  
DIRECTED BY ANDRE DOBSON

# Monterey: Courage always counts for a Noble team

Pete Noble was up to his old tricks last year.

Just when you thought he couldn't squeeze anything more out of a football team, the Monterey Toreadores reached the CCS playoffs for the second year in a row then pulled off one of the most shocking first-round upsets in the section with a 27-20 victory against previously undefeated Pacific Grove on the Pacific Grove field.

Make no mistake about it, Noble is the master and commander of every football ship he has sailed.

Then again, what else is new for a coach who has had only one losing season in the last 12 years?

That includes a stop at Gonzales High in 2002 when he took a team that went 3-7 the year before and turned it into an MTLAL championship squad that finished 9-1.

Noble's return to Monterey High in 2003 was just as impressive. The Toreadores ended a two-year, 21-game losing streak in 2003, finished as MBL co-champs in 2004 and went 7-3 and reached the Small School semifinals last year.

Noble begins his 14th year at Monterey, and including his one year at Gonzales, has a Monterey County overall record of 103-51-2.

No other Monterey County coach is close in the win department. Seaside High's **Al Avila** is next with 64 wins and **Jeff Carnazzo** at Palma has 60.

The key, said commander Noble, is to treat coaching as if it is a job.

"For a lot of guys, coaching is a hobby," Noble said. "They may be contractors, bartenders and postmen coaching teams. And to them, coaching is a hobby. They have something else to do. I do this for a living. It's my job. They pay us to do it and we should approach it professionally.

**A TOREADORES PRODUCTION**

**WATKINS WRAP:** Never underestimate a Pete Noble team. ☆☆☆

**Selected showtimes**

■ Sept. 8: At Aptos, 7:30	■ Oct. 13: Monte Vista Christian at MPC, 7:30
■ Sept. 15: At Half Moon Bay, 6:30	■ Oct. 20: Watsonville at MPC, 7:30
■ *Sept. 22: Marshall of San Francisco, 6:30	■ Oct. 28: At North County, 2
■ *Sept. 29: Soquel, 7:30	■ Nov. 3: At Pajaro Valley (Watsonville High), 7:30
■ *Oct. 6: Gonzales, 7:30	■ Nov. 10: At Seaside, 2

\*Subject to change depending on venue availability.

There's no time to play golf, be with the family or things like that. It's sad, but that's the plight of a public school football coach."

Winning, however, can help ease the strain. "Part of being successful is what makes it fun," Noble, who has been involved in education for 35 years, said.

Monterey, a school with a rich history of talented quarterbacks, should be successful again this year, especially when your quarterback is named **Montana**.

And this quarterback is no ordinary Joe. He's **Montana Russo**, a 6-2, 210-pounder who wears a size 14 shoe. He was a first-team, all-league receiver last year who ranked among the leaders in touchdown receptions with seven.

If Monterey is going to produce the league's third straight Offensive Player of the Year (**Austin Elmore** in 2004, **Michael Phillips** in 2005), Russo is probably going to have to carry much of the load.

**Eric Hess**, who showed traces of stardom last year — two touchdowns against Alisal, 151 yards against Pacific Grove) — gives Monterey another weapon in the backfield.

**Wesley Tucker**, a second-team defensive

back last season, could be Russo's primary receiver this season.

Monterey has plenty of experienced linemen with the return of **Mike Olivo**, second-team all-leaguer **Dominic Jackson**, **Anthony Augon** and **Ryan Uchita**.

The Toreadores bring back five starters on defense, including linebacker **Obed Logo** and **Dominic Nargi**.

Transfer **Jeremy Wright** from Seaside, along with **Tucker**, bolster the defensive backfield.

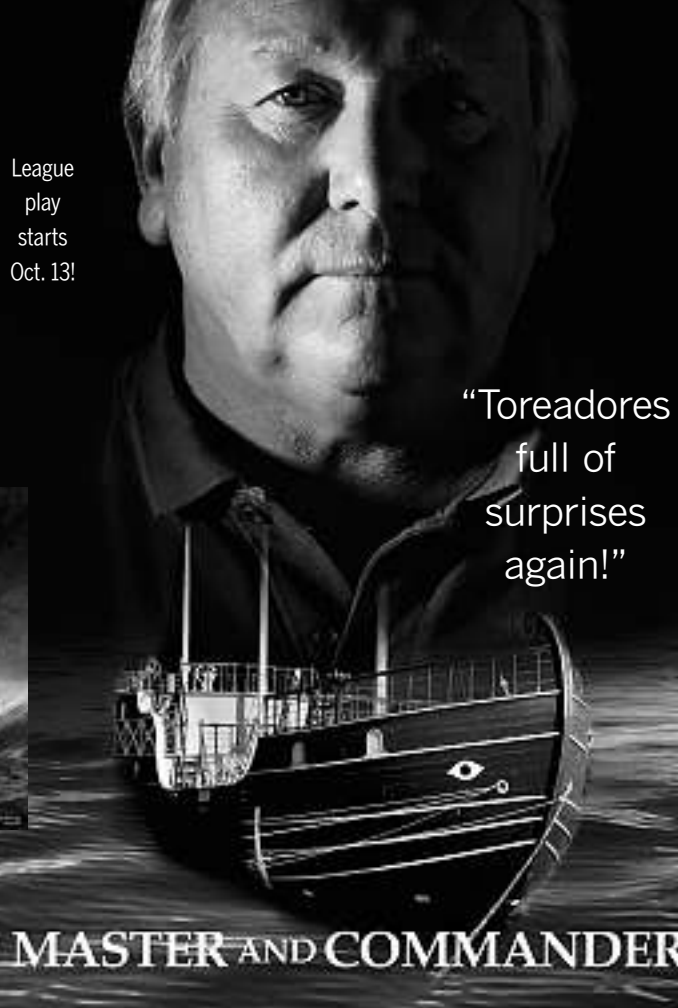
Monterey still is coping with poor field conditions and practices on something resembling a rock quarry as it waits patiently for a new field with an artificial surface to be installed.

With any luck, the Toreadores will be able to play most of their home games at Monterey Peninsula College, but only if the stadium renovation project is complete.

"We're like the marines," Noble said. "We overcome and adapt."

League play starts Oct. 13!

"Toreadores full of surprises again!"



**MASTER AND COMMANDER**

MONTEREY HIGH SCHOOL FILM GROUP PRESENTS  
A TOREADORES PRODUCTIONS FILM  
STARRING MONTANA RUSSO WITH ERIC HESS  
DIRECTED BY PETE NOBLE