

Australia, Norwalk and now Santa Barbara Eshmade signs letter of intent



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Hailing from Australia, migrating to the United States, reaching Cerritos College and now, Santa Barbara. Tennis team Captain Nathan Eshmade is definitely going places.

He signed his letter of intent for UC Santa Barbara, officially allowing him to transfer to the Division I school for the upcoming fall semester.

"It feels really good to know that I signed the letter finally and to know that I'm definitely going to UC Santa Barbara now," he said. "It's all official. The signing was very professional. So it was a really good feeling."

The sophomore is undefeated in singles play for the season, going 22-0 in this season, and 47-2 overall in his two-year tenure.

Eshmade said, "Going undefeated is a really good feeling, but I'm not the underdog anymore. It's hard. You've got to stay on top of your game or else someone will get under your skin. Definitely being undefeated is a huge confidence boost."

He added, "I know when I transfer to UC Santa Barbara it's not going to be the same story. I'm going to have to work twice as hard than I already am now. But I'm already looking forward to that."

When Eshmade decided on Cerritos College, he knew what to expect. It wasn't the familiar game of tennis, but rather, it was knowing that he was going to have to be independent if he would commit to this.

"I (have) no family at all. They're all back home in Australia. So I came out here all by myself knowing that it was just going to be me, so I would have to do everything for myself; that included groceries, washing; everything that my mom and dad help me out with at home ... I miss my family everyday but I always talk to my parents, and my friends at home always message me. I miss it, but I don't feel too homesick because my tennis team is like a family to me."

Jose Pacquing knows Eshmade leaving for Santa Barbara will leave a void but the freshman knows it's a necessary step.

"At the end of the day, being here was to get to somewhere else," he said. "He is great here but he's

not reaching his full potential. I think D-I is perfect for him. He's had a perfect conference record; he's never lost. Why stay? He's obviously proven himself here. So I think UC Santa Barbara is great."

Eshmade recalls the contrast between the Australian style of play between the American style. It was a craft he had to master. But support from the coaching staff helped him reach a level of consistency.

"These last two years have been more consistent. I'm waiting for the right ball, I'm not trying to destroy the ball after the first or second ball; I wait five or six balls, then I'll go for the kill. That was the biggest change, getting my consistency level up and adapting to that, because everyone here likes to get the ball back in play. They don't like to finish points off, where that's me. But now I can do both which is probably my biggest change adapting from Australia to America."

Even though the attacking style has had to simmer down with that adjustment.

"He's a fighter. He'll fight for his win," Paquing said. "You can tell during every game, even if he's mentally frustrated, he'll come back from that. And that's why he's our captain because he encourages that throughout the team when he's not playing."

Eshmade will miss that camaraderie.

"Yeah, it's a very sad feeling. Obviously being a captain as a sophomore and having such a good reputation, especially the (men's) game in the semi-finals with the a huge freshmen team; I don't think any other team has this many freshmen involved and reach the semi-finals, it's a huge thing to do. It makes me sad, but I made them all better people, better players. I can see it. They keep telling me that they're going to miss me a lot. It's hard to take in but they understand it's the next stepping stone in my life and I've got to keep going. So I'm definitely going to miss them a lot."

The two-year career at Cerritos College had Eshmade not only undergo tennis, but also the pursuit of his AA degree. The most difficult thing, according to him, has been not getting sidetracked and staying focused while juggling academics and athletics.

And now it got him a spot at Santa Barbara.

"All that support from everyone has been absolutely incredible. Without them, I wouldn't have made it this far."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY: DENNY CRISTALES/TM

Power serve: Nathan Eshmade is undefeated in singles play for the season, going 22-0. Eshmade has signed a letter of intent for UC Santa Barbara.

Track and field teams head to Long Beach prelims

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The Cerritos College men and women's track and field teams managed to hold their own against competitive four year university athletes at the Long Beach State invitational on Friday and Saturday.

Although the competition was not taken quite as serious in comparison to other meets by the coaching staff, the Falcons proved that they could run, jump and throw just as good as the four year athletes with prestigious school titles on their uniforms.

The meet was set up in a way to give respectable competition to the four year university athletes.

Many of the schools competing in the meet included Ohio State, Long Beach State and schools from Alaska.

The meet lasted from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. according to men's assistant coach, Marco Anzures.

"It's a big meet," Anzures said.

The two day meet proved to be a valuable warm up assignment for the athletes as they prepared for the Long Beach City College prelims.

The fierce competition from the higher level athletes gave the Falcons a battle in which they proved themselves among the elite track and field athletes.

"Preparation for the prelims so far is pretty much a tune-up," Anzures said.

Competitor of the Long Beach State Invitational,

Ariel Melendez said that the event went well for her and her teammates as a whole.

"I got my PR (1029) for the 400," Melendez said.

Even though Melendez's skills truly shine when it comes to distance events, the track and field coaching staff feels that certain athletes can compete well in other events outside their comfort zone.

"I have to think its the same mentality," Melendez said. "So switching events does not throw me off, I have to get in the zone in which ever event I am put in."

Running side by side with the four year athletes, Melendez was not shaken by the difference of collegiate athletic division.

"It was intimidating at first but then overall, it gives me a little push and a little more drive to see how far I can push myself," Melendez said.

Ramiro Santana was active in the Long Beach State invitational and will also be competing in the Long Beach City College prelims.

"Physically and mentally I was a little nervous, we were competing against four year athletes which are at a higher level than us," Santana said.

According to Santana he believes the invitational has given him the training and confidence he needs to compete in the conference prelims.

The transportation will arrive at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday and the meet will commence at noon according to Melendez.



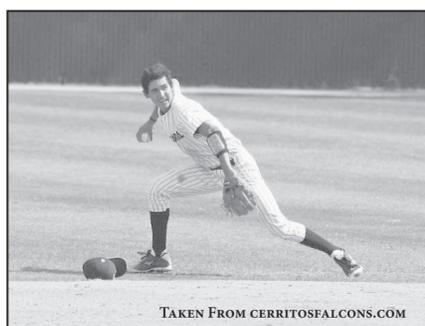
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Invitational provides Prelim training: Sophomore Kathia Avila sprints down the track past freshman Jeni Vickers. The two runners will compete in the Long Beach City College Prelims, Avila running the 1500 and the 5000 event and Vickers running 100HH and 400IH.

Baseball

Apr 24 El Camino Compton Center away 2:30 p.m.

Following the home game against El Camino Compton Center, the Falcons will travel to the Tartars' baseball field for the second game.



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Game time 2:30 p.m.

Softball

May 3 at TBA CCCAA Regional Playoffs 1st Round

Following the game on Tuesday the Falcons took out Los Angeles Harbor 14-0 in the fifth inning. Keeping up the winning locomotive it has kept throughout the season, the softball team will venture into the first day of playoffs. The team has a 29-10 statistic overall. Conference statistic stands at 17-3.

Game time TBA

Scan to watch an interview with track athlete Destiny Talalemotu.



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