

Artiaga focused on work despite health

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If there was anything Cerritos College men's soccer head coach Benny Artiaga wanted you to know about this past season, it's that Cerritos Falcons are back.

His team managed to make the Southern California Regional Playoffs despite posting a record of 9-7-5. However, the team did go 5-1-2 in conference play.

The team was bounced in the first round of the playoffs after losing 2-1 to Golden West College.

In addition to the up and down season, Artiaga dealt with one of his most trying seasons of late.

"I had been dealing with this injury for three or four years and the last two seasons it has gotten unbearable," he said.

Artiaga had been dealing with a 13 and a half millimeter herniation/bulge in his back. He said it crippled him.

"My nerve was pinched nine months under excruciating pain and the last month I spent on my back almost to the point of not being able to tend for myself or do any daily activities," he recalled.

Artiaga was forced to miss multiple practices and games throughout the course of the season.

But then things got even worse.

Artiaga said, "At that point, coaching effectively was completely out of the question. Doctors were concerned of permanent nerve damage so surgery was required and unfortunately it happened during our season."

Artiaga's surgery was scheduled for Nov. 11, during a must-win conference game for his men's soccer team.

"Not being there for them was the hardest thing I've had to deal with in a long time. But in retrospect, I should've done it a lot sooner, probably last year. Because the truth of the matter is when you live with this type of pain, it's impossible to do your job with the same enthusiasm and excitement as you have in the past," Artiaga said.

After waking up from surgery, Artiaga said the first thing out of his mouth to his surgeon was whether or not his team was headed to the playoffs.

He was delighted to find out his Falcons defeated the El Camino Warriors and were headed to the So-

Cal Regional Playoffs.

In a previous interview, forward Oscar Canela said, "For our coach to be in surgery and miss previous games, [the Falcons] knew we had to give it our full 100 percent. We wanted to get that win for us but mainly for him."

The dream was short-lived as Cerritos was eliminated from the playoffs just eight days later. However, Artiaga still takes pride in what his team was able to do.

Artiaga said, "This season was very special to me and winning the South Coast Conference was important because it took a collective effort. When I went completely down prior to the Mt. San Antonio [match], we were in complete control of the conference, but again it's very difficult when the head coach goes down because you add confusion to a team.

"My assistants did a great job of keeping it together. Chris Lakkavich, Jose Esparza, Raul Ruiz and the rest of my staff did a great job of keeping it together. We spoke or texted almost daily."

Furthermore, Artiaga expressed some displeasure with some of the season awards that were handed out.

"Too bad my coaches didn't win Coach of the Year but our conference is notorious for making a mockery of that award as they usually hand out those awards out of pity and to losing programs. But we don't get wrapped up in that though; we focus on winning and transferring out our kids which we have done extremely well for over a decade," he said.

He also even found time to credit his players for the hard work they put into the season.

"The boys did a great job of turning it around and getting back on track to win the conference," he said.

Freshman midfielder/forward Luis Garcia won the conference's Offensive Player of the Year and freshman defender Jose Ponce was runner-up for the Defensive Player of the Year award.

According to Artiaga, "[These] are exciting times for our program as we know we will be a force to be reckoned with. This upcoming season will be like when I first started coaching and had no state titles to my name; I'm going to come back hungry as ever. Next year's team should be as good as we have had in a long, long time."

This was obviously one of the hardest seasons for Artiaga to deal with, but his team was able to personify one of the mantras he lives by daily: Never say die.

Season Recap

Date	Opponent	Result
30-Aug	at Citrus	W, 7-0
2-Sep	vs. Las Positas	L, 2-1
3-Sep	vs. LA Mission	W, 3-2
4-Sep	vs. San Diego Mesa	T, 1-1
9-Sep	vs. Golden West	L, 1-0
13-Sep	vs. Oxnard	T, 2-2
16-Sep	vs. Santa Monica	W, 3-1
20-Sep	vs. Taft	T, 1-1
30-Sep	at El Camino-Compton	W, 5-1
4-Oct	vs. Long Beach City	T, 0-0
7-Oct	vs. LA Harbor	W, 8-3
Date	Opponent	Result
11-Oct	vs. El Camino	W, 5-0
14-Oct	at Mt. San Antonio	L, 1-0
18-Oct	vs. Pasadena City	L, 2-0
21-Oct	at Chaffey	L, 3-1
25-Oct	vs. East LA	W, 3-0
28-Oct	vs. Rio Hondo	L, 2-0
1-Nov	vs. El Camino-Compton	T, 0-0
4-Nov	at Long Beach City	L, 1-0
8-Nov	vs. LA Harbor	W, 4-0
11-Nov	at El Camino	W, 3-2
19-Nov	at Golden West	L, 2-1

SOURCE: CERRITOSFALCONS.COM
INFOGRAPH BY: TERREL EMERSON



DAVID JENKINS/TM

The rich keep getting richer: The Cerritos College wrestling team added another trophy to this case after winning the Southern California Regional Championships. The CCCAA State Championships take place Friday and Saturday.

Wrestling captures SoCal Title

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As the Cerritos Falcons wrestling team obtained the Southern California Champions over the weekend, they look towards the upcoming weekend, in which CCCAA State Championships will take place.

Due to their win, 11 wrestlers from the team will advance to CCCAA.

The 11 being:

- Norberto Buenrostro
- Richard Pocock
- Dylan Moreno
- David Van Weems
- Kevin James
- Wyatt Gerl
- Blake Vasquez
- Bryant Vasquez
- Kennith Kirk
- Isaiah Leyva
- David Zavala

These men will be competing in what is the last wrestling event of the season.

Out of the 11, four had won individual championships over the weekend.

The 124-pound freshmen Norberto Buenrostro has been able to pick himself back up and win a total of four matches.

Buenrostro was nervous in upcoming days of the event. He was stressing over his weight needing to come down.

With a bruised face, he said, "Trying to get my weight down the day before, I was stressing over that. I did my best not to think about it too much. Coach told me 'don't worry about it, just wrestle' and that's what I did. I showed up and competed. I got two falls for my team, I got a major in the semi, and I won a 2-1 position over the No. 1 seat and came out on top. I battled through, never stopped wrestling. Now I [have] to carry

it till next weekend and hopefully win that state title."

Another from the 11 is the 141-pound sophomore Pocock, who was able to capture three victories and obtain an individual championship.

He felt good about the weekend. Being that this is his second season, he did better than last year.

By this time his freshmen year, he was fifth in regionals, now coming out on top with an individual title this year really shows Pocock hard over the past year. He has his teammates to thank.

"One of my weaknesses last year use to be on my feet. I used to not be good and neutral, but now I'm getting a lot better and neutral. It's because of my teammates. We've been all practicing together and they've helped me get better on my feet," he said.

However, he is self-aware that the season is not over and that CCCAA State is just around the corner.

He's confident in his abilities and understands that anything can happen and said that he'll go out and do his best and wrestle.

Another one from the 11 who won an individual championship at Southern regionals is the 157-pound sophomore Moreno.

He won two matches and obtained his individual champion by a coin toss between his teammate James for the first place position. His first by pin fall and the second by defeat.

"My teammate and I flipped a coin for who got first and second, but the other matches leading into it they were intense. We come to do what we had to do. [Head coach Don Garriott] prepared us best he could for it.

"They were matches that we've gone through before throughout the season. I knew that I had to get to the finals, same thing with my teammate [James] we just had to get to the finals and make it easy, put ourselves in the best position for next week for state[...] I'm excited," Moreno

expressed.

Throughout the season, Moreno studied his film matches and picked up flaws and tried to correct them. He did his best to capitalize and correct little mistakes that he saw, and works toward getting better.

He feels confident in himself, and the team and is hopeful that they will become state champions.

Garriott, who is no stranger to championships and bringing them home, has been looking forward to this all year.

Every single time, when his wrestling team would do an outstanding job in past duals or past tournaments he made it clear that those wins meant very little to him simply because they weren't Regionals or State.

What Garriott also seemed to express throughout the season was the conditioning and stamina of his men wasn't up to par.

This time however, he believes he saw what he has been looking for.

"I felt good. We've talked all year about where we needed to get to and this weekend we got there. We were right there. Now, as long as we didn't peak too early we'll be good," Garriott said.

One in particular wrestler that Garriott said has improved throughout the season is 149-pound freshman Gerl.

"I've definitely seen some people put the daily practice [in] and come in with a goal every day. Gerl has really come in and changed some things. He's been really close to some of the top guys and he's slowly closed the gap on those guys and has beaten the No. 1 guy in the state[...] and has been doing a good job," Garriott said.

CCCAA State Championship is going to be on Friday at Victory Valley College.

Women's soccer makes it five straight titles

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"Wow. It's been a tough grind. If you would've asked me five years ago if we could win it five in a row, I would've told you, 'No.' It's tough, it's a lot of work; from the coaching staff to the [players]," Gonzalez said. "It's a cycle, you only have them for two years. So, we'll get back on the bus and enjoy this for a couple of minutes and then we'll start talking about next year."

Over the last five seasons, Cerritos has compiled a remarkable record of 115-4-7.

In the midst of all the championship commotion Jaramillo was seen hunched over with her head in her hands, face full of tears.

"I just felt tired. The emotions

got to me. It's my last game here so winning a championship just kind of caught up to me," Jaramillo said. "I feel very comfortable, my goal when I came here was to win a state championship and I was able to win it two years in a row. I am very thankful to the coaches for giving me the opportunity to play here."

One key contributor for the Falcons win was the stellar play of Defensive Player of the Year Dana Jacobs.

"I think once we realized we were going into overtime; we understood it was now or never, we were leaving everything on the field. We were not trying to take their goalkeeper to penalty kicks and we wanted it. We wanted to make history and prove it was all worth it,"

she said.

After the game, Jacobs was shocked yet pleasantly surprised that she had been awarded the Most Valuable Player award for the state championship game.

Now her freshmen season has finished and she has three new titles: Defensive Player of the Year, Most Valuable Player and State Champion. After the game, Jacobs explained which title means the most to her.

"Defensive Player of the Year [means the most to me]. I'm a midfielder but we had some problems early in the season so I had to get pushed back and I'm so thankful for it," she said.

She added that the move has done a lot for her future in soccer.

Five straight state championships is an amazing feat in of itself, but the win makes good for Gonzalez' sixth state title in the last nine seasons.

Many of his players see Gonzalez as an enigma that's not easily explainable.

Jacobs said, "[Gonzalez] is definitely one of a kind. When people ask me about him, I tell them, 'You can't describe what he's like, you have to experience it.' He's very driven, he knows exactly what he wants and he knows what he deserves and he will stop at nothing to get it."