

VIEWPOINTS

Editorials • Opinions • Letters to the Editor



The mission of the Southwestern College Sun is to serve its campuses and their communities by providing information, insights and stimulating discussions of news, activities and topics relevant to our readers. The staff strives to produce a newspaper that is timely, accurate, fair, interesting, visual and accessible to readers. Though The Sun is a student publication, staff members ascribe to the ethical and moral guidelines of professional journalists.

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AWARDS/HONORS

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|---|---|
| National College Newspaper Hall of Fame
Inducted 2018 | San Diego County Multicultural Heritage Award |
| ACP Pacemaker 100 An Outstanding Student Publication of the Century
2022 | California Newspaper Publishers Association California College Newspaper of the Year
2013, 2016, 2020, 2021, 2023 |
| Student Press Law Center National College Press Freedom Award
2011, 2018 | Student Newspaper General Excellence
2002-23 |
| National Newspaper Association National College Newspaper of the Year
2004-2023 | Society of Professional Journalists National Mark of Excellence
2001-23 |
| Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Awards
2003-06, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012-2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 | First Amendment Award
2002, 2005 |
| General Excellence
2001-23 | San Diego Press Club Excellence in Journalism
1999-2023 |
| Best of Show
2001-24 | Directors Award for Defense of Free Speech
2012 |
| Columbia University Scholastic Press Association Gold Medal for Journalism Excellence
2001-23 | Journalism Association of Community Colleges Pacesetter Award
2001-18, 2022-24 |
| College Media Association National College Newspaper of the Year
2020, 22, 24 | Newspaper General Excellence
2000-2024 |
| California College Media Association Outstanding College/University Newspaper | American Scholastic Press Association Community College Newspaper of the Year |



ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT NAVARRO / STAFF

UNSELFISH SOCCER SQUAD TAKES ONE FOR THE TEAM

Had the Feb. 23 women's basketball game between the Southwestern College Jaguars and Mira Costa Spartans been a typical community college contest it would have been forgotten by St. Patrick's Day.

Instead, it will live in the annals of Southwestern College history as long as this college stands. Southwestern is justifiably criticized for its lack of school spirit, but the women's soccer team demonstrated a selfless love for our institution and its athletic program that will span generations.

As 2023 wound down the original '23-24 women's basketball team fell apart like *papel picado* in a thunderstorm. Illness, injuries and incompletes led to the forfeiture of five games.

Athletic department leadership was about to call off the season and surrender the rest of the schedule when an inquisitive soccer player asked the basketball

coach if members of the women's excellent *equipo de fútbol* could fill in. Coach Janet Eleazar said she was open to the idea.

Like a true champion, All-PCAC striker Gialli Francisco, the captain of the soccer team, overdelivered. She signed up 12 teammates to give basketball a try. Soon they stopped dribbling with their feet and started using their hands.

Perhaps Francisco realized the enormity of what she had done, maybe not. She and her friends may have saved the women's basketball team from oblivion. Teams at Southwestern College that go on "temporary sabbatical" usually permanently vanish. Gone are the Southwestern wrestling team, golf, men's volleyball and men's tennis. (Women's tennis survived thanks to tenacious coach Susan Reasons and the late, great Athletic Director Jim Spillers.)

Southwestern's soccer rockers were Pacific Coast Athletic Conference champions in 2022 and narrowly missed repeating in 2023. They are fast and furious on the pitch.

They were fish out of water on the hardwood. Opponents routinely beat them by more than 100 points. They were shown no mercy and offered no quarter. Night after night they got their butts kicked, then handed to them.

Watching them play you would never know.

Each player – like their effervescent captain – radiated the joy of little girls first learning the game on a weathered South Bay playground. Francisco reminded her friends that if they were doing their best, that was all they could do.

It was all they had to do.

The Dutiful Dozen modeled resilience, integrity and courage by playing a foreign sport the very best they could every minute they were on the court. Like the non-violent protesters in Gandhi's India and King's Birmingham, the young women showed courage by intentionally marching into basketball beatdowns night after night after night.

They were the embodiment of grace and the epitome of class.

There may never be a more important meaningless game than the Feb. 23 season finale against Mira Costa. When they played on the Spartan's home court earlier in the season the Lady Jaguars absorbed an excruciating 112-4 trouncing.

Again, you would never know.

Southwestern's lineup of five-footers looked tiny lined up against Mira Costa's core of six-footers, but the Jaguars played the game the right way even if they did so many things wrong. A raucous crowd packed the bleachers and the support was thunderous. It was a perfect community college moment. Eager, if underprepared young members of our community doing their very best while caring adults support them.

Thank you, ladies, for what you did for our college by showing our region that we are not quitters. We are proud of you and grateful that you are proud enough of us to represent all of us with joyfulness and integrity.

We will never forget you.