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MIDWAY DRILLER

SERVING TAFT AND THE WESTSIDE COMMUNITIES SINCE 1910

Thursday, September 2, 2021

Vol. 111 - Edition 35



Photo by Doug Keeler/Midway Driller
West Kern Community College District Board members and Taft College administration celebrating the ribbon cutting for the new \$17.4 million student services center. SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE A8.

Wildcats win 2021 football opener, 56-0

By Jonah Armstrong

Last Friday Taft Union High School opened the 2021 football season on the road against the California City Ravens.

Going in either team didn't know what to expect from the other since Chase Gratt on D the line assisted Caleb Kozloski middle linebacker for a sack. Not having enough yards to make a first down, Cal City was forced to punt. Mizener caught the kick, taking it for a 15-yard touchdown.

The Wildcats won their away non-league game against the Ravens, 56-0.

Wildcat Coach Brian Durkan's offense scored right out the gate in the

first quarter with a 1-yard TD by Brock Mizener. Mizener wasn't satisfied just with that.

The defense held the Ravens close to their own 10-yd line.

Chase Gratt on D the line assisted Caleb Kozloski middle linebacker for a sack. Not having enough yards to make a first down, Cal City was forced to punt. Mizener caught the kick, taking it for a 15-yard touchdown.

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COVID-19 spreading rapidly in Kern County

By Doug Keeler

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COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in Taft and the rest of Kern County.

The Kern County Health Department reported Monday that infections in the 93268 zip code increased by 59 cases from last Thursday until Monday morning then 21 new cases were reported Tuesday.

The Taft area now has 160 active cases

and 2,019 since the pandemic began in.

Kern County saw a big increase in cases, too.

The health department said 1,482 new cases were reported over the weekend in Kern County, and another 511 cases in the 24-hour period ending Tuesday morning, bringing the county total to 124,943 since the pandemic began.

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Bandy retires after 33 years, 567 wins

By Robert Lewis

California Community College Women's Volleyball Coaches Association

Most people know her today for her long tenure as Taft College athletic director and as a vital voice in California Community College athletics, but 2021 marks the end of a 33-year run as Cougars women's volleyball head coach for the legendary Kanoe Bandy. She will continue her regular duties as Taft AD.

Mallori Rossi was selected to replace Bandy earlier this month after leading the Cal State Stanislaus women's volleyball program the last six years. Prior to Cal State Stanislaus, Rossi served as an assistant coach at Fresno State.

A native of Bakersfield, Rossi played collegiately at the University of Colorado and at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. At UOP, she twice earned first-team All-Big West Conference honors at the outside hitter position. After college, she went on to play professionally in the Greece Premier Volleyball League.

Bandy retired from

her coaching duties after working through both administrative and health/safety hurdles during the COVID-19 pandemic to help Taft participate in an abbreviated, pushed back 2020 season. Taft played 12 matches with five other colleges as part of the Central Cali Bubble, a group that played the only competition in community college indoor women's volleyball since the 2019 season. All the more remarkable was the feat because so many colleges entire athletic programs remained shut down while Taft bravely returned in applying health protocols to play indoors with Sequoias, Antelope Valley, Bakersfield, Cerro Coso, and Cuesta.

The current CCCAA Management Council chairperson and a member of the CCCAA Board of Directors, Bandy coached her final victory, a sweep over Cerro Coso on March 26 that gave her 567 career wins. A coaching career that started in 1987, and included a two-year period in which Taft volleyball went dormant (1994-1995), had its ups

and downs but was a passion for Bandy. She persevered as a head coach even during the world health crisis.

Kanoe was named the Central Valley Conference Coach of the Year seven times and NorCal Regional Coach of the Year for three consecutive years in 2003-2005. In 2005, Bandy was honored as the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Northern Regional Coach of the Year and was also celebrated at the awards banquet of the AVCA Convention in Kansas City in 2010 for her then 400th AVCA win. In 2015, the CCCAA gave her a Coaching Achievement Award.

"This was not an easy decision," Bandy said of retiring from coaching. "The last 25 of my coaching have been while I was serving as the athletic director as well. It's been some of the busiest and yet rewarding times I could have ever experienced."

Bandy is proud of her 2001 and 2017 teams who won the CCCAA State Scholar Team Awards. The 2017 team



Photo by Doug Keeler/Midway Driller
Kanoe Bandy talks to the Cougar volleyball team during a timeout in a match against Fresno in 2019.

had an overall grade point average of 3.43.

Her best years in coaching occurred during a tragic time in her life when her sister and then assistant coach Kealii Pearl was diagnosed with cancer. Her sister passed away from the disease in October, 2005. Driven by Kealii's love and competitive drive for the sport, Bandy was inspired to coach the Cougars to three consecutive CVC championships in 2003-2005. In 2004, Taft had its best season ever in volleyball when the program finished 23-3 and

placed fourth at the state tournament.

"My most memorable seasons were in 2004 and 2005 when my sister was battling bone cancer," Bandy said. "I learned the resilience and strength of our young people. The team captains took charge and pushed through to two our program's best seasons. I have loved every team I've coached. They were all unique in their own way and I was challenged each time to find ways to reach them. As I reflect on my time coach-

ing, I can say that I learned more from these young people than they could have ever learned from me. It has been a pleasure."

In 2019, Bandy accepted the Under Armour National Athletic Director of the Year Award at the NACDA's 54th Annual Convention in Orlando, Fla.

Bandy was a long-time treasurer for the state's volleyball coaches association (CCCVCA) and is a continuing treasurer for the state's AD association.



STARTING THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021
West Side Family Health Care will open at
7:00 am Monday - Friday
Holiday and weekend hours will remain 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

NEW HOURS



West Side Family Health

100 E. North St. Taft, CA 92368
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