

Athletes Celebrate Women & Girls in Sports Day at Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table Luncheon

More than 400 student-athletes attend event featuring panel discussion with swimmer Alison Bernal and runner Jill Deering



More than 400 local female athletes and fitness trainer and motivational speaker Jenny Schatzle strike their power pose for the audience at Monday's luncheon recognizing girls and women in sports. (Rochelle Rose / Noozhawk photo)

By Rochelle Rose, Noozhawk Contributing Writer | @NoozhawkSociety | Published on 02.08.2016 6:13 p.m.

The [Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table](#) hosted 100 community supporters and more than 400 female high school and college athletes at a Monday celebration of [National Women & Girls in Sports Day](#).

Thanks to the generous donations of sponsors like [Village Properties](#), [Pacific Western Bank](#), [Noozhawk](#), the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table, the Page Foundation, and many others, the girls were treated to a free lunch at the [Earl Warren Showgrounds](#) event.

The lines for the tasty Mexican food buffet went quickly before the program opened with remarks by SBART board president [Cara Gamberdella](#).

She introduced Noozhawk sports editor Barry Punzal, who announced this week's Female Athlete of the Week as [Santa Barbara High School](#) soccer standout Isabelle Mendro.

Significantly, Gamberdella pointed out the enduring impact of [Title IX](#), the landmark 1972 federal civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. By extension, the law requires that girls and women have equal access to athletics and sports scholarships.

Gamberdella also noted the importance of sports and fitness participation for all girls and women, and the outstanding female athletes in the Santa Barbara community. She said that many women in the audience (including the author) grew up when there were no competitive sports for women in high school or college.

"I was one in the age group that first benefited from Title IX," she said. "I am a product of Title IX and have enjoyed a lifetime of sports. Competitive sports has wide reaching impact. It improves self-esteem and keeps you focused on your goals."

According to the [National Organization for Women](#), before Title IX, one in 27 girls played varsity high school sports. By 2001, one in every 2.5 girls played, meaning a total of 2.8 million girls played varsity sports, or 41.5 percent of all varsity athletes.

Just in case anyone was getting drowsy after lunch, local trainer and businesswoman [Jenny Schatzle](#) then jumped on the stage to rally the audience. She led a cheer in which adults and the student-athletes yelled "awesome" and struck a power pose after her cue.

"This is how we need to talk to ourselves every morning," she exclaimed.



Athletes Alison Bernal, left, and Jill Deering were the stars of a panel discussion at the National Girls and Women in Sports Day event. (Rochelle Rose / Noozhawk photo)

“Focus on the positive. If you tell yourself that you are awesome and you want to reach a goal, you will do it!”

Before the day’s main event, a panel discussion featuring local women athletes, Gamberdella introduced [Şebnem Kimyacıoğlu](#), who had been scheduled to attend but who had to back out late last month because she had just joined a professional basketball team in Cypress.

Kimyacıoğlu played basketball at [Stanford University](#) and helped lead the Cardinal to four-straight [Pac-12](#) championships.

“Sports teaches us to be part of a team; It teaches us self-confidence,” she said in a videotaped message. “My advice is to be in the moment, whether in sports, in life, or in the business world. Know that you are part of something greater — a team, a school, a city, your company, your heritage.”

Next, radio personality [Catherine Remak](#) of [K-LITE 101.7](#) introduced the two panelists: swimmer Alison Bernal and runner Jill Deering.

Bernal, an attorney at [Nye, Peabody, Stirling, Hale & Miller LLP](#), swam for [UC Santa Barbara](#) in college and has won two Masters World Championships. The mother of two plans to swim in the [2016 Masters National Championships](#) later this year.

“I didn’t start in one sport,” she said of her childhood. “My parents put me in all sports. I competed in three sports in high school but swam under coach [Gregg Wilson](#) at UCSB. That was the best decision I ever made.”

Deering — also an attorney, as in-house counsel at [MedBridge](#) — was a walk-on with the [University of the Pacific cross-country](#) team.



From left, sponsor Reneé Grubb of Village Properties, Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table Athlete of the Week Isabelle Mendro, and SBART board chairwoman Cara Gamberdella celebrate at Monday's luncheon. (Rochelle Rose / Noozhawk photo)

She continues to compete in marathons and shared about one of her challenges.

"In college I was content to run in the middle of the pack," she said. "Now I tell myself I can do it. I can be the top winner. Dream big. Follow those big dreams."

The mission of the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table is to recognize and support athletic participation as an important means of fostering discipline, teamwork, self-respect, personal responsibility and camaraderie.

The nonprofit organization provides a public forum for area athletic coaches and athletes; grants financial support to organizations, teams and individuals to further their participation in sports; and publicly honors athletic performance, scholastic achievement and exemplary ethical behavior.

Conceived in 1968 by [Jerry Harwin](#), Caesar Uyesaka and [Bill Bertka](#), the SBART gives more than 1,000 student-athletes and coaches a well-deserved pat on the back each year by publicly recognizing and honoring achievement in athletics and scholarship through [Monday Media Luncheons](#) at [Harry's Plaza Café](#), [Hall of Fame](#), Evening with the Athletes and monthly awards for Scholar Athletes, Phil Womble Ethics in Sports and [Special Olympics](#) Athlete of the Month.

[Click here for more information](#) about the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table, or contact board president Cara Gamberdella at cara@villagesite.com. [Click here to make a donation](#).

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