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COLUMN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Capistrano Valley's season-completing title run highlights many good things about sports



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Capistrano Valley players celebrate after winning the Division 1 championship on Saturday night at Cal



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At just past 9:30 on Saturday night, when catcher Nathan Manning caught the third out to secure Mission Viejo Capistrano Valley's Southern Section Division 1 baseball championship with a 2-1 win over Santa Ana Foothill, the 2017-18 high school sports season came to a close.

There were so many positive lessons learned from Capistrano Valley's triumph:



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You can be smart and be good in sports. This team of neighborhood kids already had won the Southern Section academic title for highest team grade-point average



You can be a multisport athlete in an era of specialization. The player who caught the final out, Manning, is a three-sport standout who won section championships in football and baseball and a league championship in basketball.



You can overcome an injury. Manning played with a broken finger on his nonthrowing hand.



A school district can do the right thing by supporting a veteran coach who has integrity and teaches life lessons. The head coach, Bob Zamora, was in his 41st and

probably final season. The fact he lasted this long in an age of endless parental demands is extraordinary.

Let's look back: Santa Ana Mater Dei was unbeatable from start to finish in football, aided by the best offensive line anywhere. Tommy Brown (Alabama) and Chris Murray (UCLA) helped provide protection for quarterback J.T. Daniels (USC), whose precision passes to Amon-ra St. Brown (USC), Nikko Remigio (Cal) and Bru McCoy led to a 15-0 season.

Then Daniels let out the worst-kept secret — that he would skip his senior season to join USC this summer. That led to the domino effect of quarterbacks switching schools, with Bryce Young arriving from L.A. Cathedral and backup Carter Freedland leaving for Corona Centennial.



In the City Section, Harbor City Narbonne relied on running back Jermar Jefferson to win its seventh title in the last 10 seasons. The Gauchos had looked horrible on offense during summer passing competitions and early in the season. But after a trip to Hawaii, the Gauchos regrouped and ended up winning a state title.



In basketball, Mater Dei emerged from a strong, competitive field to win the Southern Section Open Division title. Guard Spencer Freedman became the first player to win MVP honors three straight seasons in the Trinity League. Chatsworth Sierra Canyon finished with a state championship when the talented Trailblazers figured out how to play together and win close games.

Westchester was too much for Fairfax and won the 14th City Section basketball championship for coach Ed Azzam. The Lions never figured out how to deal with the size and physicality of 6-foot-6, 260-pound Kaelen Allen.

Windward became No. 1 in girls' basketball, with junior Charisma Osborne putting on a show game after game in pressure situations to lead the Wildcats to the Open Division state title.

