



PHOTOS BY JIM KNOWLES

Pacific High cheerleaders from the class of 1978 Celia (Gallegos) Samarripa and Tina Rivera lead the crowd at the Pacific vs. San Leandro alumni flag football game, the final game before the old bleachers are torn down and the new Burrell Field and Pacific Sports Complex is built. Below, Pacific grad Manuel Franko dons his Vikings helmet.

By Jim Knowles

San Leandro Times

The rain held off for the afternoon just in time for the reunion and final game at Burrell Field on Saturday.

Football players, cheerleaders and alumni from Pacific High and San Leandro High had a ball at Burrell Field and played the final game on the gridiron before the stands are demolished. Then school officials broke ground for the new field and sports complex.

Even some of the cheerleaders arrived to lead the yells in front of the bleachers. Celia (Gallegos) Samarripa and Tina Rivera, both Pacific High class of 1978, came in their original cheerleader uniforms. A few guys wore their Vikings helmets, and Pacific's green and gold balloons decked the stands across from San Leandro's red and blue.

Samarripa remembers the year Pacific played San Leandro and a helicopter landed in the middle of the field at halftime and the Pacific mascot, the Viking, jumped out of the chopper.

“Our mascot came out of the helicopter and everybody went crazy,” she said.

Players from the '60s through the '80s warmed up on the field and lined up for the National Anthem. Former Pirates quarterback Kevin Sullivan, who was later quarterback at Cal, took the helm for San Leandro, and Brad White took the snaps for Pacific.

White struck first with a long bomb on the opening series to receiver Randy Kerr for a touchdown. Sullivan came back later with a touchdown pass to receiver Scott Kruger.

On the sideline, Mike Talbot (SLHS) class of 1968 recalls the rivalry.

“My life almost went to hell because I was on the team in 1966, the first year that San Leandro lost to Pacific,” he said. “But the next year we game them such a butt-whoopin’ that it made it all better.”

As the game commenced, Channel 2 sports anchor Fred Inglis provided the play-by-play, commentary and quips to make it an entertaining afternoon.

The game was organized by the San Leandro Sports Foundation, which raises funds for school sports.

“These guys coming back 30 years later and having a good time – it’s all because of their time in sports, their camaraderie. We can’t lose that,” said Martin Capron, president of the San Leandro Sports Foundation, which organized the event.

Right after the game, school officials held a groundbreaking for the new field.

School board members and Superintendent Cindy Cathey dug into the field with shovels near the 50-yard line to mark the beginning of the construction of the new Burrell Field and Pacific Sports Complex.

Construction is on schedule and set to begin the middle of this month, according to Cathey.

The Pirates will play football on the new field in the fall of 2013. The team will shuffle between other local fields for their home games in the 2012 season, but it will all be worth the while once the new Burrell Field opens, Cathey said.

“It was fantastic to see all the people come to this friendly rivalry,” Cathey said.

A video of the game on DVD is available from Dave Pullman with a \$10 donation to the San Leandro Sports Foundation Inc. To order a DVD go to the foundation’s website: www.SLSFI.org.

Burrell Field Pop Quiz:

1. Who was Burrell Field named after and what was his connection?
2. Who was Pacific High's first and only varsity football coach?
3. What pro AFL football team practiced at Burrell Field in 1960's?
4. What SL police chief played quarterback and defensive back at Burrell Field?
5. Pacific's first varsity win was against what school?

Answers:

- 1: SL Superintendent Clarence Burrell
2. Tom Gunnari (only head varsity football coach in Pacific High history)
3. Oakland Raiders and other AFL teams.
4. Chief Joe Kitchen during the 1960s.

5. DeAnza High School in 1962.

Thanks to Les Nardine, who gathered the quiz information from Pacific High yearbooks.