Athlete of the Month: Riley Morgan

By Allen Koyano

Riley Morgan has achieved much in her life, but her greatest accomplishment so far was winning the 2013 Bay League Doubles Tournament with her long-time doubles partner Nicole Scotten.

There were many obstacles within their many matches, but Morgan and Scotten triumphed: not only did they bring home the big W, but they also brought home a plaque to cement their legacy on the PVHS tennis court fence.

As with all good things, Morgan had to work hard to achieve this big accomplishment. But, throughout her journey she was never alone.

Having begun this endeavor at the age of six, Morgan has been playing tennis for a long time. Said Morgan, “Ever since I was a little kid, my parents really helped and were always there for me.”

Now, at the age of eighteen, they still continue this encouragement, “My mom has always been there for me. Whether it’s a hard-fought win or a disappointing loss, she’s the one who always knows the right thing to say at the right time.”

Having spent twelve years dedicated to bettering her game, Morgan also owes much of her success to her favorite coach, Dennis Riza, who has been with her since the day she started tennis.

Riza continues to support Morgan throughout her tennis career and is a major factor in helping to develop and cultivate her game -- even during the toughest times.

These tough times vary and arise during unexpected situations, but one such incident sticks out amongst the rest.

During a summer tournament in 2012, Morgan felt an excruciating pain in her lower back. Unable to continue playing, Morgan had to leave halfway through the match; however, little did she know, stopping halfway through a tournament turned into stopping for a couple of months. After going to the doctor’s she discovered that she suffered from a serious lower back injury.

“When I first felt it hit me, I didn’t think I was able to recover from it,” said Morgan. However, her patience and her striving to come back onto the court proved victorious and became a major comeback from a minor setback. The road to recovery included lots of physical therapy and acupuncture, but it all helped her gradually recovery.

Although tennis takes up a lot of time, Morgan has solid grades and has constantly improving game by learning time management. “The last few years have been a challenge… There were times when I thought I could not do well in both tennis and school during my sophomore and junior years.”

But with a combined effort of both her individual determination and the school’s accommodating scheduling options, Morgan was able to find a happy medium, “I do not have a third or a sixth period, so this allows me to play tennis early in the day and still have time to study and finish my work.”

Through all the struggles and obstacles Morgan has overcome, there has been a light at the end of this tunnel. Recalling her start, Morgan said, “When I started to play tennis, that was when I knew I wanted to keep playing.” And keep playing, she will, because in Fall 2014, she plans to start a new chapter by playing tennis as a Bronco at Santa Clara University.

