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SPORTS

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by Jennifer Yoshikoshi February 8, 2024 3:43 pm Updated February 12, 2024 3:01 pm



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Menlo-Atherton student athletes sign their letters of intent in a signing event on campus on Feb. 7, 2024. Courtesy Arthur Wilkie.

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On Feb. 7, National Letter of Intent Signing Day, 13 senior athletes at Menlo-Atherton High School and 10 students at Woodside High School signed to their prospective colleges during an event on campus. This year's colleges include: Georgetown University, Amherst College, University of California at Santa Barbara and University of Virginia.

Parents, friends and classmates attended the signing event to support these students who have committed to NCAA Division 1 through 3 collegiate sports programs in a variety of sports: lacrosse, track and field, baseball and swimming. While sporting their college gear, students took a monumental step in officially signing their national letter of intent (NLI).

"In our league, we have one of the premier athletic programs," said Steven Kryger, M-A athletics director, lacrosse coach and math teacher.

Every year, M-A represents 12-20 students a year signing to collegiate sports. There are 10-15 more students are expected to sign in the spring as well, according to Kryger.

These students are known for maintaining high academic scores while also dedicating hours on the field.

Tatum Olesen, a widely recognized student athlete in the Peninsula, signed with the University of Virginia for D1 cross country and track. She plays three sports for M-A including soccer, cross country, track. The [San Mateo Daily Journal awarded her Girls' Athlete of the Year](#) for the 2022-23 school year.

Olesen expressed excitement about going to the University of Virginia and said the hardest part of the signing process was "actually deciding" where she wanted to go. After visiting the campus and seeing that the coach was very supportive, she liked the UVA campus, which is in Charlottesville, and made her decision.

Olesen's parents, Marc and Avery Olesen, are proud of their daughter's accomplishments and share her excitement in being able to see Tatum compete at the collegiate level next school year.

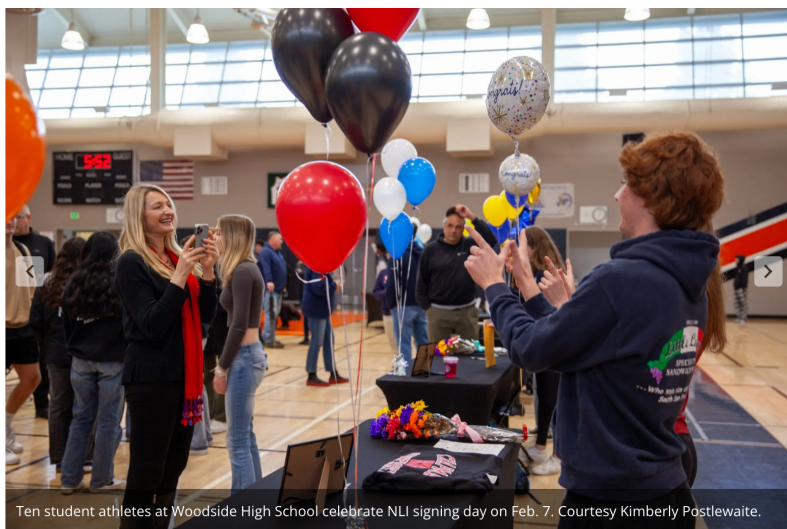
"I think her hardwork has paid off," said Avery Olesen, Tatum's mother. "I'm very impressed with how she balanced school, social life and family."

High school student athletes are hardworking and dedicated but they are not alone in their journey to victory.

'It takes a village for these kids to do well. There are lots of people that are working for their success.'

Steven Kryger, M-A athletics director, lacrosse coach and math teacher

"It takes a village for these kids to do well," said Kryger. "There are lots of people that are working for their success."



Ten student athletes at Woodside High School celebrate NLI signing day on Feb. 7. Courtesy Kimberly Postlewaite.

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Woodside High School also held its NLI signing day with 10 student athletes signing to colleges including Chapman University, Brown University and UC San Diego for swimming, volleyball, rowing and baseball.

During the event, each student was spotlighted by an introduction by guidance counselor Francisco Negri. Each student wrote on their plans for college, gratitude for their parents, teammates and coaches, and advice they have for other high school athletes, to which Negri read at the event.

"I'd like to thank my mom for being willing to sleep in the back seat of the car at 4 a.m. while I practiced, and my dad for always rooting for me and letting me know when I was almost halfway done with every erg piece," wrote Katie Myers, who signed to Oregon State University for rowing. "Setbacks will happen. The measure of a good student and a good athlete is how you overcome those setbacks."

These students have been involved in sports since they were young children. Some have been active in their sport for as long as 14 years and others have played for as short as 3 years.

Along with committing to play and compete in their sport at the collegiate level, students such as swimmer Edana Huang, plan to major in bioengineering at UC San Diego.

Ben Ricketts for his introduction, who signed to play football for the College of San Mateo, wrote: "High school sports have taught me about hard work and work ethic that I have been able to apply in and off the field." He plans to become a firefighter and says CMS has a great program.

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