

Player's death spurs extra health precautions at Bakersfield Christian

By MAGGIE CREAMER, Californian staff writer
Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Aug 27, 2008

Since Bakersfield Christian High School varsity football player Patrick Allen died earlier this month, the school has been reviewing its football practice policies, President Daniel Cole said Tuesday.

President Daniel Cole of Bakersfield Christian High School talks with a reporter about student Patrick Allen.

Cole and football coach Doug Barnett, who is also the athletic director, said in future seasons, coaches will pass out handouts to parents with specific instructions to keep players healthy. This would be in addition to the mandatory parent meeting the football team has at the beginning of the season.

Coaches also will devote more time in the spring and early summer to talking about hydration and nutrition.

The school and Allen's parents believe his death was at least partially heat-related with temperatures hitting 104 degrees and humidity 36 percent that day. The Kern County coroner's office has not pinpointed the cause of death; it's awaiting toxicology test results.

On the day Allen died, the team started a light practice at 4:30 p.m. and were wearing full pads, Barnett said. That morning, they had practiced in shells.

While at practice, Allen did not complain or exhibit signs of heat stroke, Barnett said.

Barnett said he constantly checks the [air quality](#) and alerts from the California Interscholastic Federation.

Also, Barnett meets with coaches three times a year to review policies and refresh coaches on strategies to keep athletes healthy.

The players are advised to drink water whenever they need it, and the team has mandatory breaks.

"They are constantly getting water," he said. "They have to drink at least every 10 minutes."

Also, a certified trainer is on campus whenever athletes are practicing, Barnett said.

At the beginning of last week, the coaches shortened practice to allow players time to grieve, he said.

Now, the team is back to its normal routine and getting ready for the season.

Cole said they met with a grief trauma team after Patrick's death to find out the best way to let students grieve.

"We want to get the kids close to normalcy as quickly as possible," Barnett said.

Spare the Air Day as temperatures climb

By Henry K. Lee
S.F. Chronicle, Wednesday, August 27, 2008

Grab those bikes and stow those lawn mowers - today is a Spare the Air Day because of the hot, still weather that's in store for much of the Bay Area.

While air quality officials are urging people to take public transit, there won't be any free rides.

Forecasters for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District called a Spare the Air Day because they expect temperatures of at least 100 degrees in the inland regions of the Bay Area, with minimal winds.

"We have a high-pressure system that's in place over the Bay Area, and temperatures will be building over the next couple of days," air quality district spokeswoman Kristine Roselius said Tuesday.

Ozone levels are expected to be high in the South Bay and the East Bay, Roselius said.

During Spare the Air days, residents are asked to take transit, minimize driving, turn up the thermostat on their air conditioners and avoid using aerosol sprays or gas-powered lawn mowers.

Free rides on transit on Spare the Air Days - a strategy that's been used in recent years - aren't being offered this year. Air quality and transit officials offered only one free-transit day this year, on June 19.

Mistaken Beliefs About Cancer Abound

Washington Post Wed. Aug. 27, 2008

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 27 (HealthDay News) -- People throughout the world have major misconceptions when it comes to what causes cancer, new research suggests.

Results from a survey released Aug. 27 at the International Union Against Cancer's (UICC's) World Cancer Congress in Geneva, found that people tend to inflate the threat from environmental factors and minimize the threat of behaviors that are well-established cancer risk factors.

Researchers interviewed 29,925 people in 29 countries last year to compare data on perceptions about cancer risk factors among high-, middle-, and low-income countries.

Among their findings was the fact that people in high-income countries were least likely to believe that drinking alcohol increases the risk of cancer, when, in fact, cancer risk rises as alcohol intake increases. Specifically, 42 percent of the people in the high-income countries said alcohol does not increase the risk, compared with 26 percent of those in middle-income countries and 15 percent of those in low-income countries.

Another finding was that people in high-income countries felt that not eating enough fruits and vegetables was more risky than drinking alcohol. The truth is that the evidence supporting the protective effect of produce consumption is weaker than the evidence that alcohol intake is harmful.

In addition, people in rich countries thought that stress and [air pollution](#) were greater risk factors than alcohol intake, even though stress is not recognized as a cause of cancer and air pollution is a minor contributor compared with alcohol intake.

The people in middle- and low-income countries were more likely than those in high-income countries to say that "not much can be done" to cure cancer or that they didn't know whether anything could be done. And a surprising 75 percent of survey respondents in low-income countries preferred for their doctor to make all their cancer treatment decisions, while 72 percent of the people in high-income countries said that the decisions should be made between the doctor and patient, or by the patient alone.

Finally, people in all countries were more ready to accept that things they could not control (e.g., air pollution) were risk factors than things they could control (e.g., overweight, which is an established cancer risk factor).

The researchers hope that their data will be used to put into action cancer education campaigns that address some of these misconceptions.

"This survey reveals that there are some big unheard messages. These kind of data help us to quantify the differences between countries and to highlight where additional efforts are needed. Some of these countries have rarely had any population survey data to help their programme planning efforts," researcher David Hill, president-elect of UICC and director of the Cancer Council Victoria in Melbourne, Australia, said in a UICC press release.

UN climate talks make headway on emission limits

By ARTHUR MAX , Associated Press Writer
Modesto Bee, Wednesday, August 27, 2008

ACCRA, Ghana — Talks on a new global warming agreement have begun to resolve some major sticking points, the U.N. climate chief said Wednesday, sounding a promising note after months of sluggish negotiations often marked by confrontation among industrial and developing countries.

Yvo de Boer, who in the past has chided delegates for delays, gave an upbeat assessment at the end of a weeklong conference of 160 nations, the latest round in a two-year process that is due to end with the signing of an accord in December 2009.

"This has been a very important and a very encouraging meeting, said De Boer. "The process has speeded up, and governments are becoming very serious about negotiating a result."

Environmentalists agreed progress had been made. "Accra shows that overcoming the muddle of conflicting views and crafting an effective deal to tackle climate change is possible," said the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, or WWF.

The delegates found some common ground on ways to help developing countries limit emissions and strategies for compensating poorer countries, especially in Africa, that will likely be hard hit by the effects of global warming.

Last year a U.N. panel of scientists said that climate change already is happening, and the earth's temperature would continue to rise even if carbon emissions were reduced to zero today because of the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. But they warned of possible catastrophic effects unless emissions peak within the next 10 to 15 years and then decline sharply.

The U.N. talks aim for a treaty to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which regulates the emissions of 37 industrial countries and sets out ways they can benefit from helping poor countries use clean energy.

The United States rejected the Kyoto accord, arguing it would harm American business and that it made no comparable demands on emerging economies. China, India and other large developing countries refused to accept a binding arrangement that would limit their development and their declared mission to ease poverty at home.

In what could be a step toward a compromise, the Accra talks made headway on an arrangement that would focus on limiting carbon emissions by specific industries such as steel, cement or power generation. Unlike industrial countries, developing countries would face no binding targets on their economies as a whole.

In a second area of progress, delegates agreed that countries should be compensated for slowing or halting deforestation, and that countries where forests have largely been depleted should be rewarded for conserving and expanding their remaining forest cover.

New and detailed proposals also were suggested for raising the hundreds of billions of dollars needed to help poor countries grapple with the effects of climate change. Poor countries, especially in Africa, are expected to suffer harsher drought, flooding and crop failures, and hundreds of millions of people will feel the stress of water shortages.

De Boer said the various proposals will be packaged together for the next round of talks in Poland in December, in what would amount to "a first version of a negotiating text."

"The issues are still contentious, but ideas have been put on the table," said Jake Schmidt, of the National Resources Defense Council. "The posturing stage is closing a little bit."

[Fresno Bee editorial, Wed., Aug. 27, 2008:](#)

Governor switches tracks

Schwarzenegger signs bill that makes useful changes in high-speed rail bond.

The governor breathed new life into a revised high-speed rail bond when he backed away from his pledge to ignore all legislation until there's a budget deal and signed Assembly Bill 3034 Tuesday.

The bill makes some improvements to the existing high-speed rail bond, Proposition 1, which should make this crucial initiative more palatable to more voters statewide. A revised initiative would be Proposition 1a on the ballot.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger promised to sign the bill in a video conference with the editorial board of The Bee. It came after what most believed was a Sunday deadline for changes in the November ballot, but Schwarzenegger pulled a rabbit out of his electoral hat by noting that the ballot can't be complete until presumptive Republican presidential nominee John McCain has named his choice for vice president. That choice must also be included on the ballot, according to the Secretary of State's office, which prepares ballot pamphlets for counties to print and mail to voters.

That probably means the regular voter guide, already printed, will include language describing the original Proposition 1. A supplemental guide will be printed describing Proposition 1a, and it appears that the new measure will actually be on the Nov. 4 ballot.

In the context of the low drama and high farce that surrounds governance in Sacramento these days, the maneuver almost seems statesmanlike. But we'll take it. The high-speed project is too important to the Valley and California to let it go to the voters in anything but the strongest form.

Proposition 1a includes the same \$9 billion for high-speed rail and \$950 million for regional transit as its predecessor.

The changes in the ballot proposition through AB 3034 include a higher priority for the San Francisco to Los Angeles to Anaheim stretch of track (through Fresno), but allows other routes to compete for funding in the initial phases of construction. That should draw more support from areas such as San Diego and Sacramento.

AB 3034 also sets a 10% limit on spending bond funds for studies, planning and various other efforts not directly related to construction. It limits administrative expenses to 2.4% of bond funds.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority, which will build the system, must complete a revised business plan by Oct. 1.

Oversight of all aspects of the project would be strengthened.

All of these were changes Schwarzenegger insisted upon before he pledged his support for the bond measure, so it makes sense that he'd make an exception to his veto vow for high-speed rail.

The governor also said he'd sign legislation putting a water bond on the ballot, along with measures to "securitize" the state lottery and create a "rainy day" budget fund, but none of those bills is ready for a signature.

So it looks like an improved high-speed rail bond measure will be placed in front of voters after all. The rail project has the potential, over the years, to create vast numbers of new jobs, improve