



SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

FALL 2021 VARSITY FOOTBALL GAME NOTES

2 State Champions

1997 Division II
2011 Division I

3 CIF-Southern Section Champions

1996 Division V
1997 Division V
2011 PAC-5

24 CIF-Southern Section Playoff Appearances

1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997,
1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005,
2006, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017 &
2019

4 League Champions

1996, 1997, 2000 & 2001

32-Plus Varsity Seasons

Overall Record: 229-134-3 (.630)
Home: 124-61-3 (.668)
Road: 105-73-0 (.590)

7 Nationally Ranked Teams

1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2011, 2012 & 2017



**San Juan Hills Stallions (0-0) at
Santa Margarita Catholic Eagles (0-0)**

Saddleback College (Mission Viejo, California)

Friday, August 20, 2021 • 7:00 p.m.



SPRING 2021 SEASON RECAP & HIGHLIGHTS

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, the State of California announced the delay of the fall high school football season until at-least December of 2020 or January of 2021. The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) announced that it supported these requirements. Having to wait longer than expected, the postponed high school season started to see a turnaround as schools began practices in late-February of 2021. Most schools, including Santa Margarita Catholic, were able to salvage at-least part of the season and play five to six games, starting in mid-March, after the protracted layoff. Unfortunately, SMC did have one of its scheduled contests, on Saturday, April 3 with Lutheran (Orange), cancelled due to a positive COVID-19 test within the OLu program. The Eagles wound up playing five games in the spring, one non-league game and four contests versus Trinity League opponents.

The highlight of the season had to be the resounding 42-0 victory over rival JSerra Catholic at the Santa Ana Bowl. The victory represented the Eagles' first league win since November of 2017. Overall, SMC finished with a 2-3 record for first-year Coach Anthony Rouzier. The Eagles finished the campaign ranked in several polls -- No. 6 in the county by the *Orange County Register*, No. 9 in the Southern Section and No. 13 in the state by MaxPreps.com and No. 28 in the state by Cal-Hi Sports.

Highlights of the shortened season included four Eagles being named to various Cal-Hi Sports All-State Teams. This included then seniors Derek Wilkins (First), Colt Fulton (Third) and Reymello Murphy (Third) and then junior Hero Kanu (Second). Both Wilkins and Kanu also earned Second-Team honors from MaxPreps.com.

This season is filled with excitement and great expectations. Last spring and during the past off-season, Coach Rouzier and staff have injected confidence, enthusiasm and a winning philosophy into the program. Those elements, coupled with a solid and experienced core, gives Santa Margarita Catholic the opportunity to vault forward in the mighty Trinity League.

HEAD COACH ANTHONY ROUZIER

Anthony Rouzier begins his second season as the Head Varsity Coach at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. Prior to taking the reigns of the program in the spring of 2021, Rouzier coached at SMC for three seasons, first serving as the linebacker coach and then as the Eagles' defensive coordinator. The path to Head Coach started on August 27, 2020 when Rouzier was named on an interim basis. He replaced Tim Walsh after his resignation from the position to focus on a medical issue. On February 5, 2021, Rouzier was named fulltime Head Coach by school President Andy Sulick.

Rouzier played collegiately at the University of Connecticut in 2005. There he was the first true freshman walk-on to start in the Division-era of the school. He then transferred to the University of Massachusetts as a scholarship athlete and was a member of two Colonial Athletic Conference championships teams. In the classroom, Rouzier earned All-Academic All-Conference honors in 2007 and 2008.

After his collegiate playing days, in 2014, Rouzier coached at Amherst Regional High School (Massachusetts) where he started as the linebacker coach and was promoted to Defensive Coordinator mid-season. Rouzier then proceeded to coach the outside linebackers at Winston-Salem State University (North Carolina) in the spring of 2015. Shortly after that, he returned as a graduate assistant at his Alma Mater, the University of Massachusetts. There he worked with the defensive backs in 2015 and linebackers in 2016.

Rouzier then found his way to Europe to coach with the Hamburg Huskies of the German Football League. There, in 2017, he was the interim Head Coach and Defensive Coordinator. For his success, Rouzier was promoted to and accepted the Head Coaching position. Rouzier was also the Defensive Coordinator for the Under-17 Hamburg State All-Star team and worked with a recruiting service that helped European prospects earn Division 1 college scholarships in the United States. One of the other German coaches was current SMC assistant coach Sean Embree. It was Embree who convinced Rouzier that coaching at SMC would be worth his while and he soon found his way to South Orange County.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Rouzier married his wife Elwira, who he met in Germany in 2018. He holds Juris Doctor and Master's of Business Administration degrees from Florida International University and a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from the University of Massachusetts. He is the co-creator of a children's book and non-profit organization that promotes health and wellness.

SANTA MARGARITA PLAYERS TO WATCH

0 Nicholas "Niko" Lopez | Tight End | Junior | 6-4 / 210

- Ranked No. 63 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- *Los Angeles Times* Potential Breakout Star in the Southland for Fall 2021
- A significant contributor in the Eagles' championship run at the 7-on-7 "Battle at the Beach" Passing Tournament competition at Edison (Huntington Beach) in July. Named event Most Valuable Player by PrepRedzone.com
- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense
- Had 14 receptions for 164 yards (11.7 average) and two touchdowns in Spring 2021 season
- Called-up to varsity for the CIF-Southern Section Division 2 playoff game at Sierra Canyon in 2019 and had one catch for 11 yards
- A member of the Eagles basketball program who is described as having sound basketball instincts that transfer to the football field, especially when going after and securing the ball

5 Jaxon Potter | Quarterback | Junior | 6-3 / 170

- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason All-State Second-Team - Offense (QB)
- Ranked No. 22 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- Ranked No. 5 quarterback in Orange County for Fall 2021 by the *Orange County Register*
- Cal-Hi Sports 2021 Preseason Hot 100 - No. 71 in state for Class of 2023
- Demonstrated poise and confidence in helping lead the Eagles to the championship of the 7-on-7 "Battle at the Beach" Passing Tournament at Edison (Huntington Beach) in July
- Transfer from JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano) where he saw action at quarterback during his freshman and sophomore years on varsity

6 Syncere Brackett | Linebacker | Sophomore | 6-3 / 230

- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason All-State Second-Team - Offense (LB)
- Ranked No. 48 overall prospect in the state by PrepRedzone.com for Class of 2024
- Saw significant game action as a freshman during the Spring 2021 season when he registered 11 total tackles

7 Nick Gallegos | Wide Receiver / Defensive Back | Senior | 5-11 / 175

- Recognized as an outstanding player at the 7-on-7 "Battle at the Beach" Passing Tournament at Edison (Huntington Beach) in July by PrepRedzone.com
- Transfer from Lutheran (Orange) where he played on offense and defense for the Lancers in the Spring

9 Ben Durham | Defensive Back | Junior | 5-11 / 195

- Spring 2021 Letterman
- Listed on PrepRedzone.com's "Watch List" of state prospects for Class of 2023

10 Ryan Zolnick | Defensive End / Linebacker | Senior | 6-1 / 215

- Ranked No. 85 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021

- Transfer from JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano)
- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League First-Team - Defense
- Registered 17 total tackles and two sacks in spring 2021 season

11 Levar Talley | Defensive Line | Sophomore | 6-3 / 205

- Spring 2021 Letterman
- Listed on PrepRedzone.com's "Watch List" of state prospects for Class of 2024

12 Gage Grant | Quarterback / Strong Safety / Athlete | Senior | 6-0 / 180

- Ranked No. 132 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- Recognized as an outstanding player at the 7-on-7 "Battle at the Beach" Passing Tournament at Edison (Huntington Beach) in July by PrepRedzone.com
- Transfer from Tustin High School where he spent last two school years after completing freshman year at Mater Dei
- Spring 2019 Empire League Co-Defensive Player of the Year at Tustin High School - Strong Safety
- Saw significant action at quarterback and strong safety for the Tillers who finished in a three-way tie for the Empire League title with Pacifica (Garden Grove) and Cypress
- As a QB, completed 63.8% of pass attempts and threw 10 touchdowns. Rushed for three touchdowns and added one receiving
- Connected for four touchdown passes in each of the final two games of spring 2021 season for the Tillers versus Kennedy (La Palma) and Valencia (Placentia)

13 Donovan Comestro | Defensive Back | Junior | 6-0 / 160

- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Defense
- Notched 16 total tackles (4 for loss), a half sack, one interception, three pass defenses and forced two fumbles in Spring 2021

18 Jalen Jones | Wide Receiver | Senior | 5-10 / 180

- Ranked No. 58 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- Listed on PrepRedzone.com's "Watch List" of state prospects for the Class of 2022
- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense
- Caught 15 passes for 195 yards (13.0 average) and two touchdowns in Spring 2021
- Has received offers from Valparaiso and Davidson
- A speed-burner, has run 10.9 in the 100-meters
- A member of the Eagles track team, participating in the 100, 200 and 4x100 meter relay

19 Ian Grogan | Wide Receiver | Senior | 6-0 / 185

- Rushed four times while appearing at running back in Spring 2021, scoring two touchdowns. Also added one receiving
- 2019 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense
- Team leader with 511 receiving yards (21.3 average) in 2019 with two touchdowns
- Notched career highs with five receptions along with 113 yards receiving in loss at Cherry Creek in 2019

34 Blake Wilson | Defensive Back | Junior | 5-11 / 170

- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Defense
- Second on team in Spring 2021 in total tackles with 32
- Handles the team's kick-off duties

45 Hero Kanu | Defensive Tackle | Senior | 6-5 / 300

- A Top-100 national and Top-10 California 5-star prospect currently with 24 offers from Division 1 Power Five conference schools. On July 9, officially narrowed down to ten: Alabama, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Clemson, LSU, Oklahoma, USC, Georgia, Washington and Texas
- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason All-State First-Team - Defense (DL)
- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason All-Orange County First-Team - Defense (DL)
- scorebooklive.com Fall 2021 Preseason All-State Football Team (DL)
- SI.com All-American Watch List - Top Interior Defensive Linemen - "Notable"
- Ranked No. 10 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- Ranked No. 1 defensive lineman in Orange County for Fall 2021 by the *Orange County Register*

- *Los Angeles Times* Top 10 Defensive Linemen to Watch in Fall 2021
- *Los Angeles Times* Prep Rally: "Big Men to Watch" in Fall 2021
- MaxPreps.com compares to Kanu to Cameron Hayward of the Pittsburgh Steelers
- Ranked No. 8 overall prospect in the state by MaxPreps.com
- Ranked No. 1 prospect in the state and No. 7 in the nation at defensive tackle by MaxPreps.com
- Ranked No. 9 overall prospect in the state by PrepRedzone.com for Class of 2022
- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason Hot 100 - No. 11 overall in state for Class of 2022
- *Orange County Register's* - "Juniors Who Will Reign in the Fall of 2021"
- 2022 All-American Bowl game invitee (San Antonio) -- January 8, 2022: Will announce college selection
- Spring 2021 All-Trinity First-Team League - Defense
- Ranked No. 8 defensive lineman in the state after Spring 2021 season by scorebooklive.com
- scorebooklive.com Spring 2021 All-State Football Team (DL)
- Cal-Hi Sports Spring 2021 All-State Second-Team - Defense (DL)
- Cal-Hi Sports Spring 2021 All-State First-Team - Defense - Junior Team (DL)
- MaxPreps.com Spring 2021 All-State Second-Team - Defense (DL)
- *Los Angeles Times* Spring 2021 All-Star High School First-Team - Defense (DL)
- Class of 2022 "Stock Risers" selection by PrepRedzone.com
- Cal-Hi Sports Winter 2021 Class of 2022 Top-100 recruit

62 Jalani Liva | Offensive Line | Junior | 6-4 / 320

- Recognized as a "Lineman on the Rise" in Orange County for Fall 2021 by the *Orange County Register*
- Spring 2021 Letterman
- Ranked the No. 87 overall prospect in the state by PrepRedzone.com for Class of 2023 and Outstanding Newcomer

67 Kilian O'Connor | Offensive Line | Senior | 6-2 / 285

- Has received an offer from Columbia
- Cal-Hi Sports Fall 2021 Preseason All-State Second-Team - Offense (OL)
- Ranked No. 5 offensive lineman in Orange County for Fall 2021 by PrepRedzone.com
- Ranked No. 61 by *Orange County Register* of Hot-150 Top Impact Players for Fall 2021
- Ranked No. 6 offensive lineman in Orange County for Fall 2021 by the *Orange County Register*
- Listed on PrepRedzone.com's "Watch List" of state prospects for the Class of 2022
- Spring 2021 All-Trinity League Second-Team - Offense
- Cal-Hi Sports Winter 2021 No. 63 state prospect for Class of 2022
- Cal-Hi Sports Summer 2020 No. 59 state prospect for Class of 2022
- 2019 All-Trinity League First-Team - Offense

SADDLEBACK COLLEGE STADIUM - HOME OF THE EAGLES

The new Saddleback College sports complex in Mission Viejo is once again the home for the Santa Margarita Catholic Eagles varsity football team. The brand-new complex features 8,000 seats, a nine-lane running track, two turf football practice fields, a turf soccer field, thrower's park, concession stand, viewing platform with views of field and practice fields, private event rooms, storage for football, soccer and track and field equipment, modern press box, athletic team meeting rooms, state-of-the-art scoreboard, sound system with integrated Wi-Fi technologies, and full ADA compliance. The \$55 million project meets the requirements to host NCAA and USA Track and Field meets. The venue is under consideration to be a practice facility for the upcoming 2028 Summer Olympics in nearby Los Angeles. The Eagles are no strangers to the stadium, as they have played more games there than any other venue and was their primary home for more than two decades.

Eagles All-Time @ Saddleback College

As home team: 144 games - 99-43-2 (.694)

As road team: 6 games - 4-2-0 (.667)

Overall: 150 games - 103-45-2 (.693)

EAGLES CURRENT MEDIA RANKINGS

Orange County Register - Orange County: 5

MaxPreps.com - State: 17 | Southern Section: 12 | Orange County: 5

CalPreps.com - State: 16 | Southern Section: 11 | Orange County: 5

2021 SMCHS Varsity Football Game Notes - Fall Season: Game No. 1 / Non-League Game No. 1

Statistics Compiled by Shane Mielke | Game Notes Arranged and Edited by Chuck Nan

08/16/21

THIS WEEK'S OPPONENT: SAN JUAN HILLS



SMCHS Season Game No. 1 / Non-League Game No. 1

Game Date: Friday, August 20, 2021 @ Saddleback College, 7:00 p.m.

School Location: San Juan Capistrano, California

Nickname: Stallions

Head Coach: Robert Frith (61-29 -- .678)

2021 Spring Season: 2-3 Overall | 0-3 South Coast League

2019 Season: 11-4 Overall | 4-0 South Coast League (1st) | CIF-SS Division 4 Champion

All-Time Series: First Meeting

Players to Watch:

- Braden Pegan | Wide Receiver | Senior
- Cole Monach | Wide Receiver | Senior
- Elijah Barclay | Wide Receiver | Senior
- Chase Schmidt | Defensive Back | Senior

In Brief: The Stallions feature one of the best receiving corps in Orange County as they return Braden Pegan, Cole Monach and have added highly-recruited transfer Elijah Barclay. In addition, four offensive linemen return to protect the quarterback. That job should fall to either junior Colton Joseph or freshman Michael "Butter" Tollefson. Coach Robert Frith and San Juan Hills run a no-huddle aerial attack that challenges defenses. The Stallions also return five starters on defense.

NEXT WEEK'S OPPONENT: NORCO



SMCHS Season Game No. 2 / Non-League Game No. 2

Game Date: Thursday, August 26, 2021 @ Norco High School, 7:00 p.m.

School Location: Norco, California

Nickname: Cougars

Head Coach: Chuck Chastain (50-25 -- .667)

2021 Record: Opens @ Vista Murrieta (Murrieta)

2021 Spring Season: 5-0 Overall / 5-0 Big VIII League Champion

2019 Season: 8-3 Overall | 4-1 Big VIII (2nd) | 0-1 CIF-Southern Section Division 2 Playoffs

All-Time Series: 2 Games - Santa Margarita Catholic Leads 2-0-0

Last Game / SMCHS Win: 2001 -- Santa Margarita Catholic won 41-22 @ Saddleback College

Players to Watch:

- Kyle Crum | Quarterback | Senior
- Jacob Rosendahl | Running Back | Senior
- Grant Gray | Wide Receiver | Junior
- Elijah Rodriguez | Wide Receiver | Senior
- G.J. Delatorre | Defensive End | Senior

In Brief: The Cougars finished the Spring season ranked fairly high atop several polls with their 5-0 record and huge victory over vaunted rival Centennial (Corona). Coach Chastain and company will try to carry that success and momentum into this fall season. Quarterback Kyle Crum has the passing game under control and the running game will be strengthened with the return of senior Jaydn Ott (transfer back from Bishop Gorman - Las Vegas) who put up massive numbers as a freshman with the Cougars.

TRINITY LEAGUE



www.trinityleagueathletics.org

Other Upcoming Trinity League Games

Friday, August 20

2021 SMCHS Varsity Football Game Notes - Fall Season: Game No. 1 / Non-League Game No. 1

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Central (Miami, Florida) @ **St. John Bosco (Bellflower)**, 7:00 p.m.

Lutheran (Orange) @ Serra (Gardena), 7:00 p.m.

JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano) vs. Sierra Canyon (Chatsworth) @ Birmingham HS (Lake Balboa), 7:00 p.m.

Mater Dei (Santa Ana) @ Centennial (Corona), 7:00 p.m. -- This is a scrimmage only. Regularly scheduled game cancelled due to CIF-SS COVID-19 protocols. Another school, to be named, will also participate

Servite (Anaheim) @ Bishop Amat (La Puente), 7:00 p.m. -- Cancelled due to due to CIF-SS COVID-19 protocols

Friday, August 27

Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks) @ **JSerra Catholic (San Juan Capistrano)**, 7:00 p.m.

Mater Dei (Santa Ana) @ Duncanville (Texas), 7:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time

Upland vs. **Lutheran (Orange)** @ Orange Coast College (Costa Mesa), 7:00 p.m.

Bishop Alemany (Mission Hills) @ **St. John Bosco (Bellflower)**, 7:00 p.m.

Mission Viejo @ **Servite (Anaheim)**, 7:00 p.m.