

ORANGE COUNTY NEWS

All-Irvine league to become a reality for 2018-19; Crean Lutheran moving to Empire League and CdM to Sunset League



Portola High School in Irvine, which opened on Aug. 24, will be hosting many sporting events beginning in 2018-19. Portola will be part of the six-team new look Pacific Coast League. FILE PHOTO MINDY SCHAUER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER –

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PUBLISHED: May 8, 2017 at 3:53 pm | UPDATED: May 9, 2017 at 11:04 am

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The Pacific Coast League will become an all-Irvine league for 2018-19 with current member Corona del Mar moving to the Sunset League and Crean Lutheran switching from the Academy League to the Empire League for all sports, according to Woodbridge Athletic Director Rick Gibson.

Three proposals were up for final debate Monday, May 8, during the Orange County relegating meeting in Garden Grove.

Under the new plan, the PCL will include Northwood, Beckman, Irvine, Woodbridge, University and Irvine's newest public high school Portola, which will begin varsity competition in 2018-19.

"We are excited to all be together," said Gibson, who was involved in the relegating process representing the Irvine schools. "The administrations and coaches all get along and we have the same goals and expectations. Our principals, the Irvine Unified School District and Beckman did a great job helping make this happen."

There was some discussion about Crean Lutheran joining the PCL, but there were not enough votes to place the private school in the all-public school PCL, those involved in the process acknowledged.

Crean Lutheran will replace Western in the Empire League. The new-look league will include Crean Lutheran, Tustin, Cypress, Kennedy, Pacifica and Valencia beginning in 2018-19, according to Jeffrey Beavers, CLHS founding principal and executive director.

"We were honored and humbled to be a part of a significant and intense process with other Orange County principals and athletic directors, whose standards and care kept student welfare and competitive equity at the forefront of the relegating process," Beavers said. "We are excited to join the Empire League and believe it is an excellent next step for Crean Lutheran High School."

"Next fall, 2017, Crean Lutheran finishes competition in the Academy League in all sports. The Academy League added Orange Vista High School (Perris, CA) in football only for a year, to replace Sage Hill who dropped their 11 man football program one year ago just prior to the football season."

Crean Lutheran athletic director Eric Olson said school officials are looking forward to the move.

"The Empire League is an exciting next step, and it will be a competitive challenge for us," he said. "We were grateful to be welcomed by each of the Empire League school principals and athletic directors with a smile and a handshake at the end of the process; that meant a great deal."

"Crean Lutheran also entertained options to enter the Coast View League and the local Irvine only, Pacific Coast League; however, those proposals did not carry adequate votes for approval. We have tremendous respect for those schools and leagues too, and had good conversations with area leaders, which ultimately landed us in the Empire League, and we are happy to be a new member."

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