



WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 23, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Football Coach's Character-Building Merits Recognition from L.A. Chargers

WHITTIER – When Santa Fe High School Class of 2004 graduate Ryan Bateman played for the legendary Chieftain varsity football squads of the early 2000s, he rarely felt the agony of defeat. During Bateman's three years on varsity, the team went undefeated in league play. Now, Bateman is back at Santa Fe and continuing his legacy of excellence on and off the field.

Bateman returned to Santa Fe in 2023 as its new head football coach, tasked with turning around a team that had won just five games in its previous five years. The impact was immediate. One year after the Chieftains completed their season with a 0-10 record, Santa Fe High reemerged as a Del Rio League contender, finishing the year with a 9-4 record and making it to the semifinals of the CIF-SS Division 12 playoffs.

As the Chieftain football team's prospects grow brighter, Bateman's coaching methods, which rely heavily on character-building, have been highlighted through multiple accolades. Bateman was recently named a Los Angeles Charger Coach of the Week, as well as being named a Jim Staunton Champion for Character award recipient.

The Santa Fe High athletic department will receive \$1,000 from the Charger organization.

"I'm just the guy who calls the plays and the timeouts," Bateman said. "Santa Fe High School is a special place, with a winning culture. I can't say enough about our athletes and my staff. They show up, work hard, and have a great time. That's all I ask. I am blessed to be in this position."

As a Santa Fe player and assistant coach, Bateman learned X's and O's from the legendary Jack Mahlstedt, who won 232 games in his more than 30 years as Santa Fe's coach.

Santa Fe principal Craig Campbell was a Chieftain assistant coach during Bateman's playing days and was impressed by his passion for competing, his embrace of the school community, and his leadership qualities.

Years later, as he searched for a new head coach, Campbell was determined to find someone who understood Santa Fe's culture, could build interest in the program, and easily connect with students. Bateman, who stressed returning to the fundamentals of football, was the ideal fit.

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“Ryan has always been a stand-up guy who surrounded himself with good people,” Campbell said. “The first thing Ryan did when we hired him was to put up a tent in the quad and start recruiting players. He has raised expectations, he supports his players, and he has brought back the excitement that for so long has defined Santa Fe Chieftain football.”

Bateman, who is a full-time special education teacher at Santa Fe High and also serves as an assistant coach for the Chieftain baseball team, began coaching at Santa Fe in 2005, while playing baseball for Cerritos College and Whittier College. Bateman also continued his education, receiving a bachelor’s degree in performance and sports psychology and a master’s degree in special education from Grand Canyon University. Bateman is currently considering pursuing a Ph.D.

Just prior to returning to Santa Fe, Bateman spent one year as the head baseball coach of Sunny Hills High School in Fullerton, leading the team to its first Freeway League championship since 1999.

Bateman is happily married and has a two-year-old daughter. Bateman said that becoming a parent changed his perspective, further emphasizing the importance of character-building, giving 100%, and having fun.

“Losing is disappointing but not so much if you are doing things the right way, investing in scholar-athletes as people,” Bateman said. “On Friday nights, there is nothing I love more than seeing my daughter running on the field after the game. In these moments, I’m on cloud nine.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

WUHSD_COACH1: Santa Fe High School head football coach Ryan Bateman has been named a Los Angeles Charger Coach of the Week, highlighting the character-building that has been essential in turning around a team that had been struggling for years and leading them to the CIF-SS Div. 4 playoffs in 2023. Bateman, a Santa Fe Class of 2004 graduate, was also named a Jim Staunton Champion for Character award recipient.

WUHSD_COACH2: Santa Fe High School head football coach Ryan Bateman, a protégé of legendary Chieftain coach Jack Mahlstedte, has helped to turn around the struggling Chieftain program by tapping into Santa Fe culture, returning to fundamentals, and raising expectations for success on the field. Bateman was recently named a Los Angeles Charger Coach of the Week, with the Santa Fe athletic department receiving \$1,000 from the team.

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OUR MISSION

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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