



# WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Oct. 17, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

## **Whittier Union Flag Football Coach Recognized by L.A. Chargers, Leads Team to First League Championship**

**WHITTIER** – La Serna High School girls flag football coach Dylan Long wasn't sure what to expect when tryouts were announced ahead of the school's inaugural year of Del Rio League play after flag football became sanctioned as the newest CIF-Southern Section sport for the 2024-25 school year.

Long, a Class of 2021 La Serna High graduate, hoped that enough female athletes would show interest so he could put together a complete roster - he didn't need to worry. When 118 girls came to tryouts, Long said he realized not only is the sport extremely popular, but would be a lot of fun to coach with motivated players looking to create legacies in a new sport.

La Serna High School's flag football team overcame a challenging start to the season and is now celebrating a dominant run. As the season wraps up, they now hold the title of the sport's first-ever Del Rio League champions.

Long's efforts have not gone unnoticed, as he was recently named a Los Angeles Chargers flag football Coach of the Week, an honor that comes with a \$1,000 check awarded to the school's athletic department.

"It's great to see the support flag football has received from the community. It's a testament to how we built the program," Long said. "I'm proud of what the girls have accomplished so far. They work so hard, have made great strides, and have very quickly developed into winners. You can't teach that. The players deserve all the praise."

The \$1,000 check will be put back into the flag football program to provide amenities such as team meals and to provide pink breast cancer jerseys for the players to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.

Long, who also played four years on the La Serna varsity baseball team, was a backup quarterback on the La Serna varsity football team that went to the CIF finals in 2019. He was the starting quarterback for the 2020 team, leading the squad to an undefeated 5-0 record during a season shortened by COVID, being named Del Rio League MVP and first-team All-CIF.

Still, the shortened season was a disappointment to Long and left a void. After playing three years on the Cal Poly Pomona varsity baseball team, Long, the oldest of five children, returned to La Serna, where the Long family has a storied history as star football and baseball players, looking to recapture the winning Lancer spirit.

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Long said he is immensely proud of his younger brothers and what they have accomplished, including Jake Long, a Class of 2023 graduate, starting varsity quarterback for the 2021 and 2022 seasons and currently playing baseball for the University of Utah; Owen Long, a Class of 2024 graduate, starting running back for the 2023 CIF Division 4 championship and CIF State championship football team and currently playing for Colorado State; and La Serna sophomore Grady Long, currently the starting quarterback for the 2024 varsity squad.

After playing an integral role as a La Serna player, Long is now looking to make a mark in one of Southern California’s fastest-growing sports.

With his close high school friend Alexa Valdez joining him as an assistant coach, Long has helped shape the Lancers into a supportive group of players who have adapted easily to the sport, which does not allow blocking or tackling, and lends itself to a pass-heavy offensive strategy.

“La Serna High is proud to have a passionate and dedicated coach like Dylan Long leading our flag football team,” La Serna Principal Griselda Castro said. “Congratulations to Coach Long and the entire team on their league championship victory—an incredible display of Lancer pride!”

Long is the second Whittier Union football coach to be named an L.A. Chargers Coach of the Week this school year, which is determined by an online poll and presented to high school coaches each week in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties. Santa Fe High varsity football coach Ryan Bateman received the award in September.

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**WUHSD\_LSHSCOACH1:** La Serna High School flag football coach Dylan Long walks a La Serna athlete through a play. Long was recently named a Los Angeles Chargers flag football Coach of the Week, an honor that comes with a \$1,000 check awarded to the school’s athletic department.

**WUHSD\_LSHSCOACH2:** La Serna High School's flag football team celebrates their historic achievement as the first-ever Del Rio League champions, capping off a successful inaugural season.

**WUHSD\_LSHSCOACH3:** La Serna High School flag football coach Dylan Long rallies his team with words of encouragement during a pre-game huddle, motivating them for an important league matchup this season.

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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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