

## Tulare student-athletes recognized for their good character

In partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare, TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program recognized this winter's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes at a breakfast on Tuesday.



Kevin Covert, Kiwanis member and Tulare Joint Union High School District administrator, shared that club decided about 10 years ago to create the recognition program for student athletes. "We chose to recognize student athletes not for making touchdowns or scoring goals, but for their sportsmanship. Sometimes character is not recognized, but it is deeply needed," he said.

Tulare student-athletes, nominated by their coaches, are recognized during the fall, winter, and spring seasons each year for their sportsmanship. The awards they receive include a certificate, a PVWH pin, a PVWH shirt, and a lawn sign that read "An Athlete of Character Lives Here."

Below is a list of the winter Pursuing Victory with Honor award winners.

### **Emmah Burnes, Mission Oak High School girls soccer**

Coach Michael Ridenour commended Emmah Burnes for her helpful nature. Her coach for three seasons, Ridenour said that Burnes is always the first to pick someone up. “She is a ‘teammate first’ player who is quick to praise others and to offer support to those who are struggling,” he said.

### **Jonas Barboza, Mission Oak High School boys soccer**

Assistant Coach Lee Myers said that he has known Jonas Barboza since he was a baby. He has watched Barboza along his journey to maturity and said that he is a joy to be around. “Jonas is one of our best defensive players and we have played him in almost every position,” he said. “He is a quick to encourage his teammates and even organized prayer time prior to each match.”

### **Gabby Espindola, Tulare Union High School girls soccer**

Covert read a statement provided by Coach Tony Fernandes. “Gabby is a leader on and off the field. She is so responsible to the team and to others.” Frank Mello, Tulare Union boys soccer coach, added, “She absorbs anything and everything her coach is saying. She is a model of respect – even to her opponents – and a pillar for our program.”

### **Heriberto Estrada, Tulare Union High School boys soccer**

Frank Mello said that he has watched Eddie Estrada for many years as he has been involved in club soccer. Now as his coach for two years, he said that he has to remind Estrada not to help all the time. “He tends to carry the entire burden on his shoulders. And yet, I have never heard him speak ill of anyone. Eddie does what’s right.” Estrada plans to continue his studies at College of the Sequoias.

### **Olivia Machado, Tulare Western High School girls basketball**

Athletic Director Mike Powell said that Olivia Machado, a four-sport athlete, puts the team above herself. “She is quick to put her arm around a teammate and lead the girl to where she needs to be. Olivia represents every pillar of character and we could find something to say about her for each one.” He added, “A coach can’t be in all places at once, so Olivia fills in where needed. We need people like her to return to the community to serve.”

### **Parker Princewill, Tulare Western High School boys basketball**

Coach Keith Rickard said that he has coached Parker Princewill on the varsity team for three years. “He is the perfect teammate. While he doesn’t say much, but ‘yes, sir’ and ‘no, sir’, he is always respectful. He also cheers on his teammates and always does what he’s supposed to do.”