

The state of the Redondo Union is strong. Throughout the two-day meet, I make every possible effort to contact every coach and thank him or her for attending. Most of the time they interrupt me and thank us for hosting such a great meet for their kids. They spoke of how excited the kids are to run in such a unique meet and that this meet has been circled on their calendars early on. Over and over I kept hearing about how nice it was that the volunteers were so helpful and friendly. Roger Evans, the coach at state cross country champion Simi Valley High School, stated, "I am so impressed with everything about this meet. All our top kids look forward to this meet more than any other. We're definitely coming back next year." Perhaps the greatest compliment came from Bay League rival and head track coach Damian Capazola who said, "this meet has quickly become my favorite track meet of the season. This is an over the top experience not only for my star athletes but also the kids that do not typically get into this high a caliber of a meet. Standing here watching this meet makes me proud to be a part of South Bay track and field." And Chris Dreschler who handled all our timing duties as well as entries and seedings said, "taking on the this meet had me a little concerned because of the volume of athletes involved. But your parents and volunteers were the best team I have ever worked with. Ever. This ran smoother and more professionally than any high school or college meet we have ever done. Our entire staff is blown away. Make sure they all understand how much we appreciated their hard work and friendly demeanor."

Before the glow of the meet passes us all by, I wanted to give a heartfelt thank you to all of you who helped make the Redondo Nike Track and Field Invitational the meet that it was. The time you spent on any aspect of this meet was not overlooked as we, again, put on one of the premier track and field meets in the country. In the four years that our meet has been in existence, no one meet in the country can see that gains that our meet has in that period of time. We have conquered so much, gained notoriety and had the success from the competition on the track and field that usually takes ten or more years to accomplish from a dedicated group of people. We have done this in a short period of time. This, is in no small part, because of the volunteers we have who help run the meet. Each position at the meet was important. Each position made up for a huge win because everyone took ownership in their spot and made it better by the end of their shift. And, in addition to this dedication to your position, you were nice to people and helped give a great vibe to the meet that I know I felt and other coaches commented on as well.

I want to give a special thanks to these folks:

- Laurie Baker – the one gets the work done in the back ground from running and updating the website, to getting all the volunteers signed up, to setting up the athlete check in booth and then to actually running it for two days straight – thank you!
- Dave Dill – the dedication we feel from you to this program does not go unnoticed. Making sure that all of our gear is up to date and on-hand, to giving us a vision of having a beautiful pole vault pit on the infield and picking up where ever it needed after that – thank you!
- Leslie Mull – having the thankless and HUGE job of organizing and running the concessions for the meet AND running our books. It's a lot but we cannot do it without you – thank you!
- Kevin Ryan – for being the voice of the Redondo Nike Track Invitational. I know it's a three ring circus up there and you having to announce every aspect of that meet for two days is a lot, but you handle it like a pro and get it, so we say thank you for that, once again.
- Susan Ryan – your expertise on the field has been invaluable for four years now. Having a meet of this size and having such a tight schedule begs for a poorly run and off schedule meet. But for four years, we have been behind more than 10 minutes at any time (but caught up later in the day!) which is essential for athletes who count on a time schedule to time their warm ups and give them some sort of relief that they have something to count on. In fact, this year, the meet had to be slowed down six times because you were so efficient in getting the heats on and off the track. Thank you!
- Nick Carr – my good friend and best man at my wedding! You have taken a position at the meet that is difficult, long and tiresome. Rounding up kids, announcing the same message over and over again and making sure that you get the heats ready for the track in a perfectly timed way is not an easy one. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the ownership and care you take in this position. It's one of the most important ones to ensure that the meet runs on time. Thank you!

- Wendy Claussen – Just like Nick, with no skin in the game, you come out and do an amazing job. Each year we give you more and more responsibility and this year – we gave you clerk of the course status. Huge responsibility I know. And this year, it was tougher, I know, but we so appreciate you taking ownership in that station as well. Thanks!
- Carlos Caracoza – once again, you bring your hard work and dedication to this meet is an essential one. I hardly have to pay attention to how the concessions are going because I know that you and Leslie own it. The grill set up is perfect each year and the amount of food you through out for the spectators is unbelievable.
- Doug Boswell and the finish line support – Chris Drescher, our timer this year, applauded us for the work that you and your support group maintained throughout the meet. Chris goes to and runs so many meets that that accolade was a high one indeed.
- Brian Lindquist – from set up, to break down and EVERYTHING in between that you gladly help out on, I cannot thank you enough. Your energy is boundless and your eagerness to take it on is so refreshing. Thank you!
- The admission/team check gate volunteers – those were long hours and many of you couldn't see anything that was going on at the track but you were bringing money in for the program and overseeing a big responsibility. Really appreciate your support there. Thank you!
- Greg Hough- In his first year in the booth did an amazing job announcing the many award winners. This is a very difficult task involving getting timely results and coordinating with the crew on the field.
- Jerry Hernandez- RUHS class of 1981, and former prom date of Shannon Rodriguez, for donating the wonderful plants that line the turns and awards area. It is such a nice touch of class that is unusual at a meet this size.
- Debbie Brouard- Who flies in from Arizona a day early to begin prepping her famous Beach tacos for the concessions. This has become a favorite meal at our Nike meet. I have had coaches and parents from others schools mention how much they enjoy our

tacos. And similar to Nick and Wendy. Debbie has never had a kid in our program and never went to our school. We are grateful.

- Scott Lash, Lino Almeida, Vida Rabizadeh and the Nike West team. They have been our unyielding sponsor from the beginning. They have provided us with all the tools to create this one of a kind event. They have always asked, “what do you need to make this special. We know you want a first class meet. Let’s make this happen together. Without their support none of this would have been possible.” They are an amazing team that supports us to the end.
- Andy Saltzman- Our athletic director who provides his full support of this event. He secures the fields and makes sure every detail we ask for is at our disposal. This type of support for track and field is not always the case. But it is with Andy. His hard work allows us to be great!
- Kirsten Leetch- She did an amazing job as meet director. A terrific organizer Kirsten coordinated all the area leads and did a great job of running the ship. Kirsten dedicated a great deal of time ensuring the meets success. It is with her support that I am allowed to do what I do with the meet and the team. Of course I am biased but it is Kirsten who along with our amazing volunteers that push us over the top to make the Redondo Nike Track Festival the wonderful event that it is.

As I have said in the past what makes this event special are the volunteers that make this happen. You are all a huge part of our program. The pride in our athletes eyes as they walk out onto the field for their competition is easy to see. They look around and see one of the greatest track in the country meet hosted, not by paid crew of certified track professionals, but all of us, their parents and friends parents. This is a very empowering feeling and something that overflows into everything workout and competition they participate. They know Redondo track and field is not only fast and strong but an amazing community of support.

Go Seahawks!

Bob Leetch  
Track & Field  
Redondo Union High School