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From Sports:

New Coach, New Season For Samohi Baseball

At the beginning, it's easy to see there is a new man in charge of the Santa Monica High baseball program.

Pitcher Alonzo Gonzalez and catcher Julian Solomita, who both frequently clashed with 2009 Coach Rob Duron, have been named co-captains by new coach Sheldon Philip-Guide.

Gonzalez, a 6'3" lefty with vast potential, didn't even claim one of the two starting spots for Ocean League games last season. But his control significantly improved in summer competition. If he lacked confidence, Philip-Guide is providing it by adding the leadership role.

Solomita seldom played in his junior year when Colter Johnson was an offensive threat as the catcher. But Solomita has won the job in practice for the Vikings, who begin their season March 5 at Moorpark.

"I wasn't at Samo last season, but Julian has worked hard and been a leader since I came here," said Philip-Guide.

Duron, who still teaches at Samohi, is also serving as an assistant at Mira Costa, close to his Manhattan Beach home. He was caught in the middle between his opinions of the team's personnel and complaints from parents of players -- mostly the ones not in the lineup.

When he expected support from the administration he didn't receive it, and after the season he submitted his resignation.

A coach of a school in Anaheim told him that he had a policy -- if a parent objected to him about a son's playing time, the player received a five-game suspension.

But Duron chose to leave the problem to someone else, and Athletic Director Norm Lacy hired Philip-Guide, a one-time Samohi second baseman who played briefly in the minor leagues.

Philip-Guide said seniors would have the first crack at each position, but after evaluating the players in early workouts he has several underclassmen in key roles.

"Alonzo is our No. 1 pitcher, but nobody has stood out to be the No. 2 guy," he said. "That competition will be ongoing. So far the candidates have had good days and bad days."

As No. 1, Gonzalez will follow Tyler Skaggs, the 40th player chosen in the major league draft. Skaggs is now in the Angels' farm system.

One pitcher who won't be competing is righthander Noah Tillipman, who is out for the season with an arm injury.

Among the candidates are two intriguing juniors up from the junior varsity -- Andrew McRitchie and Brandon Hershberger.

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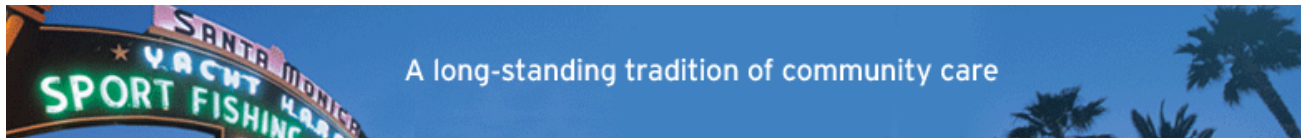
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Santa Monica Real Estate

SM City Council	<p>The 6'2" McRitchie appears to have star potential, but needs to become more consistent.</p> <p>Samohi hasn't had a dependable slugger since Cody Decker was a Viking on his way to UCLA and is currently in the San Diego Padres' farm system. Last season's team scratched for runs.</p> <p>"We're not a power-hitting team but we can score when we put hits together," said Philip-Guide, who doesn't seem concerned about the situation.</p> <p>Mikey Smith, who was second team all-league in football, is likely to be the centerfielder and leadoff man. His speed could set up innings.</p> <p>Samohi will play an ambitious non-league schedule before starting Ocean League games, when decisions about who plays and who sits will be completed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ADD your comment</p>	
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