



## ALL-STAR FOOTBALL: Paired by a marriage, bonded by football

**Editor's note:** The following story ran as a secondary element to our cover story on the Alameda/Contra Costa All-Star Football Classic game.

By Chace Bryson, Editor

David Raciti remembers the moment fondly.

During an end of the year banquet for his son's youth football team, a highlight reel was being played.

Raciti's son, Travis, was featured prominently during the highlight package. One of his new stepsons, Dominic Rolandelli — almost exclusively a soccer player to that point — viewed the highlights with wide eyes.

"He leaned over to me and said, 'Hey David, if I play football, could I have a highlight package, too,'" Raciti said. "And that was it."

That was the beginning of a brotherhood forged by football.

The Alameda/Contra Costa All-Star Football Classic on June 26 represents the final chapter, of the football portion anyway.

As an 11-year-old only child, Travis Raciti suddenly had gained six step-siblings.

"It was a real big transition for me," Raciti said. "It was definitely an adjustment."

Almost immediately, he gravitated toward the stepbrother who was the same age as him. Both boys quickly discovered how competitive the other was.

"I remember that one of the first times we met we played a game of H-O-R-S-E and I whooped him," Raciti said. "He got so mad that he kicked the basketball... We would compete over everything. We'd see who could take the groceries out of the car and into the house faster, or who could take a faster shower. Pretty much anything."

That competitive drive worked to a clear advantage in the sporting arena as well. Raciti was already a standout youth football player, and Rolandelli was a very physical soccer player.



"I was just starting to tackle people in soccer," Rolandelli said. "I was itching for contact."

So when he saw his stepbrother's highlight package, he was hooked.

Over the next seven years, the two played side-by-side; first with the Rebels and then for four years at College Park High. Each are coming off of their best individual seasons. Raciti was named the co-Most Valuable Player of the Diablo Valley Athletic League as a tight end and defensive end. Rolandelli, a lineman, was a first-team All-DVAL selection on offense and a second-team All-DVAL selection on defense.

Both made the other better, and both grew closer in the process.

"I think football has really increased our relationship as brothers," Rolandelli said. "We kind of both found out who we were while playing football, and found out what we thought about each other.

"Without football we'd be completely different people. I don't know if we'd even like each other, to be honest. We found that we had a lot in common."

The All-Star Football Classic can represent different things for many of its participants. For Raciti and Rolandelli, it marks the end of an era — the last time sharing a field together.

Raciti earned and accepted a scholarship to play tight end at San Jose State. Rolandelli could have probably continued his playing career at a junior college, but elected to attend San Francisco State and pursue a career in film.

"It's definitely going to be a very emotional game," Rolandelli said. "It means a lot to me that I can go out there and play one more time and that Travis will be there, too."



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