



**Prospector
B-Ball
Get First
“W”,**
see page B-4

Time Out



Chuck Baker
News Sports Editor
cbaker@ajnews.com

Remembering

The things that I will remember about 2008 are:

- Yippee and The Chuckster handing Grumpy Old John and his even older player partner their lunch on the golf course;
- My fantasy football team going 12-3 and taking first place in the A.J. FFL;
- The Prospector football team winning eight games (most since 1984-85) and being seeded 10th for the 4A-I State Tournament;
- The very first season of tackle football being played at Apache Trail High School;
- Having had the opportunity to watch Prospector defensive end Rusty Fernando play. Two particular games will always stand out — the 7-5 win over Shadow Mountain where Rusty had 15 tackles, eight of those behind the line of scrimmage for losses, plus a sack, and the 33-28 win over Cactus Shadows where Rusty came up with three sacks on the Falcons final drive totaling 23 yards in losses;
- Being handed a carnation by Lady Prospector senior Rachael McKay prior to the team's final home match of the season while she thanked me for my coverage of the team;
- AJHS graduation ceremonies in May that included my youngest son Kevin;
- And saying goodbye in May to senior-athletes like Chelsea Darling, Terra Ciesielski, Tim Harlan, Jimmy Cowles, Katie Corbin, Andrew Cranmer, Daniel Ambrosio, Tripper Meason, Ashley Nagle, Brianna O'Brien, Robert Mohle and Louie Crespo, who helped to make 2008 a memorable one for me.

Top Sports Story, 2008 – AJHS Boys Track Wins State Title

By **Chuck Baker**
The News

Led by a first place finish from the 4x100 relay

team of Josh Morgan, Bo Bankhead, Rusty Fernando and Shane McCullen in a school record time of 42:79, and a first place

toss in discus by senior Louie Crespo of 163-06, also a new school record,

see **Top**, page B-3



Members of the AJHS boys track and field team and coaches being recognized at a school board meeting after capturing the first State Championship title in school history May 9 and 10 at Mesa Community College.



(above) Members of the AJHS 4x100 relay State Champs, from left right, Josh Morgan, Shane McCullen, Rusty Fernando and Bo Bankhead;



(at right) State Champ in discus, Prospector senior Louie Crespo, gets ready to let one fly.

Best Of The Rest – 2008

Apache Trail Wolfpack Inaugural Season

Fielding an eight-man tackle football team for the first time in school history, the Apache Trail HS Wolfpack took the field on August 30 for their first-ever game against the Ocotillo Geckos next door to the University of Phoenix Stadium, home of the Arizona Cardinals. After getting a defensive stop to begin the game, Wolfpack quarterback Brian Mayfield ran 67 yards for a touchdown on the team's first-ever offensive play and grabbed an 8-0 lead, as if scripted for a movie. Although Apache Trail would end up losing their inaugural game 44-14, just one week later, they defeated Gilbert Desert Hills 62-40 for the school's first win. Although the Wolfpack finished their first season of football with a 2-6 overall record, they still had a chance to qualify for the post season playoffs in their season finale on November 1st at Prospector Park. All-in-all, a terrific first season under Coach Dave Wagner with promising days ahead for the Apache Trail HS Wolfpack.



The Perfect Season (13-0)

The Jr. Pee Wee Muddogs (11 and 12-year-olds) of the Black and Gold Youth Football League wrapped up a perfect 13-0 season with a 12-6 overtime victory over the Casa Grande Storm on November 8 in Maricopa to capture the Pinal County Youth Football Federation title.

Forced to play three tournament games in a seven-day period due to a protest, the Muddogs took a 6-0 lead in the championship game on a short one-yard TD run by Cisco Valenzuela in the second quarter but the Storm tied the game 6-6 with a touchdown run on fourth-and-five late in the third quarter. In overtime, on the Muddogs second play from scrimmage, quarterback Brett Darling tossed a game-winning TD pass to Gary Nielsen to cap off the 13-0, perfect season. "It was a total team effort and none of the kids gave up," said Muddogs head coach Lance Uehling. "I'm so proud of these kids."

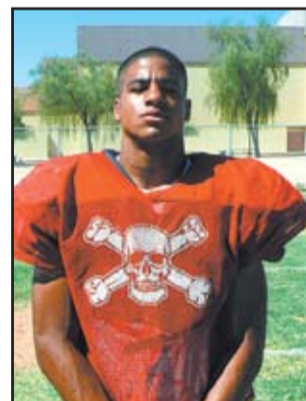


Athlete Of The Year

By **Chuck Baker**
The News

A lot of top contenders for 2008 but we gave the nod to Apache Junction senior Rusty Fernando.

In addition to being in *The News* the last couple of weeks with post season football awards pouring in (named top defensive player in the Desert Sky Region and chosen 4A All State by the Arizona Football Coaches Association) after a record setting season at defensive end with 12 sacks and 105 tackles for the 8-4 Prospector football team, Rusty was also a member of the 4x100 relay team that finished first at the 4A State Track and Field Championships back in May (see Top Story of 2008 above) with a school record time of 42:79 and he placed 8th at State in the 300 intermediate hurdles. At the 2008 AJHS Home-



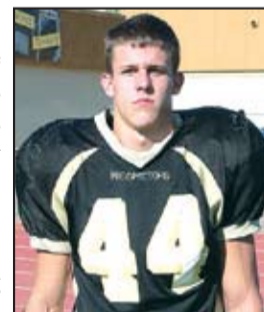
The 2008 Brake Masters "Athlete of the Year" is Rusty Fernando.

coming, Rusty was chosen Homecoming King and he currently is playing for the Prospector varsity basketball team this winter.

– Other Top Contenders –

Shane McCullen

Also a member of the State Championship-winning boys track and field team as well as the record-holding 4x100 relay squad, Shane finished runner-up at State in both the 100 and 200 meters, finished his AJHS football career with 4,340 rushing yards and 47 touchdowns, both modern day school records, and has committed to playing for Arizona State University next Fall.



Tim Harlan

Prospector senior Tim Harlan was crowned a State Wrestling Champion in the heavy-weight division back on February 16 at Jobing.com Arena in Glendale to keep alive the streak of three consecutive wrestling champs from AJHS.



Terra Ciesielski

Before heading off to Scottsdale Community College this past Fall to continue her softball career, Lady Prospector senior Terra Ciesielski wrapped up her AJHS career in the Spring of 2008 with ten pitching victories for the State-qualifying AJHS softball team, a .376 batting average, being chosen MVP at the Fox Country Fast Pitch Tournament held in El Paso, Texas as well as being selected the team's MVP and 1st



Top Sports Stories Of 2008 (By Month)

– January, 2008 –

The NJROTC Marksmanship team from Apache Junction High School placed first at the All Navy Arizona



qualifier match held January 12 at Ben Avery Shooting Range and advanced to the Southwest Regional Championships held in February in Santa Ana, California where they hoped to qualify for the Navy nationals held at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The team, which also finished first in the ten-team Pellet League, was comprised of Richard Lange, Alex Mahana, David Terock, C.J. Zanella and alternate Austin Kennedy and were coached by Senior Chief Instructor Dave Patti.

AJHS Boys Get First Soccer Win

The Apache Junction boys varsity soccer team came up with a 2-1 victory over Phoenix Shadow Mountain on



January 16, recording the school's first-ever win in soccer at the varsity level. Trailing 1-0, Luis Ruiz scored

with a penalty kick at the 29:40 mark of the first half and then, with just over two minutes until halftime, David Gamboa sent a perfect corner kick out in front of the Matadors goal and Israel Chavez kicked in the eventual game-winner for AJHS. The Prospector defense, led by Casey Althoff, Jorge Valenzuela, Matt Horton, Gamboa and goalkeeper Ray Banda, took over in the second half to preserve the 2-1 victory.

– February, 2008 –

Tim Harlan Crowned State Champ

Apache Junction heavyweight wrestler Tim Harlan defeated Doug Zismann of Phoenix Shadow Mountain 9-6 in the title match of the 4A-I State Wrestling Championships held February 16 at Jobing.com Arena in Glendale, becoming the third AJHS state champion in three years. Harlan had defeated Zismann just the week before to be crowned a Desert Sky Region champion as well.

LD Marathon Boasts 2,227 Runners

The 2008 Lost Dutchman Marathon held on Sunday, February 17 set a new attendance record with a total of 2,227 participants in five events, breaking the previous record of 2,043 set a year ago. Much of that was attributed to the high turnout for this year's half marathon with a



see **Top Stories (by Month)**, page B-3

see **Contenders**, page B-2