

**HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY**

# Spirits pay tribute to former runner Pallon

## 2008 graduate died last week after accident

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The Paraclete High cross country team honored Jeremy Pallon the best way it knew how.

The Spirits buried his running shoes.

Pallon, a 2008 Paraclete graduate and former member of the Spirits track and cross country teams, died on Wednesday from injuries suffered in a car accident on Oct. 23 in San Diego. He was 20 years old, and had been attending school at Cal State University San Marcos.

On Saturday, current and former Paraclete runners took Pallon's shoes into the hills west of Highland High, where the team routinely trains, to make sure they always remember him.

"Anytime we run out there, he'll be with us," Spirits coach Andy Helme said. "That's one of those things that Jeremy would say, 'Hey, that's a good idea.'"

Pallon was a member of the 2007 Paraclete cross country team that went to the CIF state champion-

ships. He was often around the team and knew the younger runners on this year's team who weren't in high school when he was. The Spirits last saw him right before he went back to school in late August.

"Whenever we played Ultimate Frisbee on Fridays and he would always show up when he was in town," Helme said. "So, a lot of the kids, even the freshmen and sophomores that didn't go to school with him, know him because he was always around the program and running and trying to help the kids out.

"It hit these kids pretty hard."

Helme said that was especially evident when the team was at practice on Monday, when most of them found out Pallon was on life support.

"They haven't been talking a whole lot this week," he said. "They kind of were talking for the first five minutes (last Monday) and then everybody stopped. Usually they talk the whole time but they just kind of ran."

But nearly a week later, the focus shifted from mourning to remembering a student athlete that was actively involved in the community.

"We were all just kind of shaken up at first, but now we're starting to pull together a little bit and make the rest of the season dedicated to him," said junior Ricky Ruelas, who ran and sang choir with Pallon his freshman year.

Besides burying his shoes, Paraclete is going to wear black patches on its jerseys starting today at the Alpha League Finals.

Regardless of what they physically do in Pallon's memory, the Spirits know the most important thing is to internally honor their former runner.

"We're all just trying to pull together and keep on going and make the rest of the season for him," Ruelas said. "He's always with us. A part of him will always be in our hearts."

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