

Looking for some home cooking

Christian Brothers and Sac High will play on campus this season.

By Jason Jones
BEE STAFF WRITER

Football players from Christian Brothers and Sacramento high schools will walk from their own locker rooms for home games this season.

It's a change from playing at the area community colleges that they've called home.

Christian Brothers will play home games on campus on four Saturday afternoons and one Friday afternoon, while Sacramento will play on campus twice on a Thursday, once on a Friday and twice on a Saturday.

Both programs will save money by not renting buses and facilities and keeping concession profits. The biggest start-up costs will be bleachers.

In the long run, both schools are looking for charged crowds and a positive atmosphere for the players.

"I think it's going to be a huge boost," Sac High coach and athletic director **Keith Brown** said. "I'm not even sure they know how much they're going to enjoy it."

The Dragons have called Hughes Stadium home for years. This is likely the first season Sac High has played at home, although Brown isn't positive.

"That's my understanding," Brown said. "There's been such a long history

"You can just feel the energy mounting."

Jill Bennett

Christian Brothers AD on playing football games at home

I don't want to talk out of turn." The Dragons first home game will be a 5 p.m. nonleague game Sept. 15 against Bartlett, Alaska. The Dragons plan to rent portable lights for a Sept. 23 game against Hiram Johnson and a Sept. 29 game against Rio Americano, then play 1 p.m. games Oct. 8 against El Camino and Oct. 29 against Burbank.

Christian Brothers has played at American River College in recent years but as a member of the Sierra Valley Conference, where all its opponents have home stadiums, administrators and coaches have seen the advantages of a home-field atmosphere.

Athletic director **Jill Bennett** could not pinpoint the last time the Falcons played on campus, but as far as she is concerned, it's a positive move. She said anticipation is building throughout the school for the Falcons' first home game Sept. 17 against McClatchy.

"They're getting more and more excited," Bennett said. "You can just feel the energy mounting."

In addition to McClatchy, the Falcons will play on campus against Ponderosa on Oct. 8, El Dorado on Oct. 29, Cordova on Nov. 5 and Union Mine on Nov. 11 under first-year coach **Andre Johansen**.

At Sac High, Brown said it was important to provide an electric atmosphere for players. That can be hard to come by at Hughes, which seats more than 22,000.

Last spring during the basketball playoffs, the Oak Park community came out en masse and filled the gymnasium. Brown would like the same atmosphere for football games, something he realizes Capital Athletic League rivals Casa Roble, Bella Vista, El Camino and Del Campo enjoy by playing at home.

"That's what we're hoping for," Brown said. "There was a real festive excitement for the basketball playoffs."

Bennett said the idea for games on campus began last year when then-assistant coach **Vance Mueller** asked why the team never played at home.

That started talks of how to make it happen. Now it's time to see how the community reacts to having the Falcons play on Saturday afternoons.

Bennett said she believes the plan can be a success.

"I think if we get them out to one game, they'll be hooked," she said.

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The Bee's Jason Jones can be reached at (916) 321-1139 or jejones@sacbee.com.

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