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## Running different roads

### Staabs split between Ayala, Chino Hills

[Pete Marshall](#), Staff Writer

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The rivalry between Ayala and Chino Hills high schools has been rapidly growing ever since Chino Hills opened nearly a decade ago.

Early on, of course, it was a mismatch in nearly every sport but as Chino Hills' athletic program has grown, it has narrowed the gap with Ayala in some sports, overtaken Ayala in other sports.

Such is the case in girls cross country, where in 2007 for the first time in coach Dawn Staab's career as head coach, Ayala failed to win the Sierra League title.

Instead, the Huskies won the title. What makes it even more interesting is that one of the leaders of the Chino Hills team was junior Chloé Staab, Dawn Staab's daughter.

Chloé will again be wearing the blue and green of Chino Hills and Dawn will be wearing the red and black of Ayala as Chino Hills is a heavy favorite to win a second consecutive league title today at the Sierra League finals at Mt. San Antonio College.

Both are ranked - Ayala at No. 10 in CIF-SS Division II and Chino Hills at No. 5 in Division I - but Chino Hills scored a perfect 15 (its top five were the top five in the league) at the last league meet.

When Dawn took the job as an off-campus coach at Ayala in 1998, there was no Chino Hills High School.

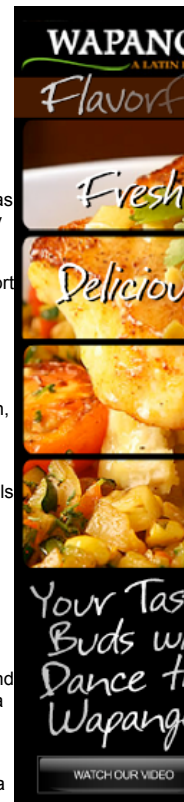
But by the time Chloé was ready for high school, the Staabs were within the boundaries to go to Chino Hills. But she had a choice of where to go.

"It definitely wasn't an easy decision," Chloé said. "But

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wanted to go where my friends were."

"I wanted her to go wherever she felt more comfortable,"



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Dawn said.

Instantly, Chloé said, she was the subject of scrutiny as a freshman from her Huskies teammates.

"Some of them saw me as competition because I was the Ayala coach's daughter," she said. "It made for some good college essays."

It also made for some stressful times.

The intracity rivalry was weakened by the fact Ayala had won 15 straight league championships, but things started to change over the last three years. In 2004, Chino Hills placed third at the Sierra League finals and second each of the next two years.

"There was greater intensity in the rivalry as we started getting better," Chloé said.

The intensity between the schools got greater as Chloé's Huskies teammates became less leery of her.

Dawn describes herself and her daughter as "Type A personalities," so when Chino Hills won the league title last year, the loss didn't sit well with Dawn.

"It was very quiet around our house," Dawn said. "It was a really hard loss for me. But I'm really proud of what they (Chino Hills) have accomplished."

Chino Hills went on to place eighth in the CIF-SS Division I finals, while Chloé finished 97th in that tough race.

Ayala finished 13th in Division II last year.

The intensity took a back seat at times, though. Chloé grew up rooting for Ayala, and knows several of the Ayala runners.

"I've always been supportive of them," she said. "We've had these girls at the dinner table."

Dawn's best friend is Chino Hills assistant coach Kim Smolchuck, and they regularly go on runs together.

Dawn certainly roots for her daughter at meets, even if she's not rooting for her daughter's team to beat her own.

And she tries not to give her daughter too much information.

"We'll be talking about a race, and suddenly, I'll let something slip and say, 'whoops, I shouldn't have said that,'" Dawn said.

It might be some piece of information about an injured Ayala runner that Chino Hills might use to its advantage.

Chloé is ranked eighth in her class with a 4.17 GPA. She is close to an appointment to the Naval Academy, where she plans to continue her running career.

Dawn will be able to root more openly and without reservation for her daughter at that point, but the family rivalry will continue long after Chloé graduates in the spring. Chloé will keep rooting for Chino Hills, and Dawn for Ayala.

"It will always be a rivalry," Dawn said.

And there's younger sister Annika, who doesn't run but is a tennis player.

She'll be attending Chino Hills, opening a brand-new chapter in the unique family tradition.

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