

Miramonte wins NCS championship with victories over Acalanes and Campolindo

By Jon Kingdon



Miramonte girls victory celebration

Photo Jane Bordalo

This may have been as dominant a season as the Lamorinda girls water polo teams have had in their history. Miramonte, Campolindo, and Acalanes had a combined won-lost record of 65-16 but when the games between each other are removed, their combined record is 54-3 for a 95% winning record against non-Lamorinda teams.

The rivalry is a huge part of the area's success, according to Acalanes head coach Misha Buchel: "That's a huge part of it. The community and culture from the rec teams all the way up and it provides that great base of which to build and the desire to beat your neighbor is

really powerful."

Miramonte

Following two undefeated seasons and championships, Miramonte entered the CIF tournament as the No. 1 seed having won the DAL and NCS tournament with a composite record of 25-2. After defeating Acalanes 11-8 in the semifinals, Miramonte faced Campolindo for the seventh time this year and came away with the championship by a score of 10-5 for a combined record of 83-2 these past three years.

"I'm pretty surprised because I thought this year was going to be pretty challenging," said head coach John Roemer,

who graduated nine seniors from last year's team. "We've been up and down so it's been hard to figure out who's going to show up at some games. In a way, it's been a lot more fun because it's wasn't automatic."

Leading the team have been seniors Tali Stryker and Rosalie Hassett. "We wouldn't be where we were now without Rosalie and Tali," Roemer said. "Their leadership is amazing. They've stepped up not only in the pool but in leadership roles in getting the girls focused and having them understand what it takes to win a championship. It's more than just playing well - it's a mindset and the other girls are beginning to understand that."

Junior goalie Eliana Botene really played well as a first-time starter and was the MVP in the Rio Grande Tournament. Other new starters this year were Audrina Kang, Alden Coate, Roxy Tarantino, and Mira Haldar all contributed a lot along with the starters.

Campolindo

With a roster of only three seniors, co-captains Ana Pieper, London Menard and Grace Gafni, and a solid core of underclassmen, Campolindo finished the regular season with a 19-7 record and only one loss to a non-Lamorindan team and entered the CIF tournament as the No. 2 seed.

"Their leadership has been

outstanding, and the girls really loved them and a lot of it has nothing to do with water polo," head coach Kim Everist said.

Campolindo would defeat Arroyo Grande 12-9 and Sacred Heart Prep 10-9, avenging an earlier season defeat to make it to the CIF championship game but once again, came up short to Miramonte 10-5.

Still, Pieper and Menard's performance in the pool can't be overlooked. "Ana's a killer on the outside and despite every team trying to stop her, she still finds a way to score," Everist said. "London's is a tremendous center that you have to run a zone against and is effective passing or scoring inside."

Juniors Nikki and Sammy Frazier and freshman Lily Holloway have also been forces on offense and Holloway and Ainsley Hogan have also been strong on defense with a number of steals.

Sydney Kring's play in the net has been outstanding but with 35 steals is a stat not to be overlooked. "Sydney is very active and mobile in front of the cage," Everist said. "She's always thinking one step ahead and that one of the things that makes her a tremendous goalkeeper and it says a lot about why we're in the position we're in."

Acalanes

Coming into the CIF tour-

namment as the five seed with a 19-7 record, Acalanes was coming off a five-overtime win over Carondelet and defeated Soquel 9-7 after trailing 7-5 entering the fourth period along with a number of close wins all season. "It's a trademark of us in general, but this group, in particular, accepts that there's no gifts," Buchel said. "We've had solid and consistent efforts throughout the season."

The Dons then lost in the CIF semifinals to Miramonte 11-8, knowing at least that they were the only team to beat Miramonte this season, having done so twice.

The team has been led by a solid core of seniors, Wendy Heffelfinger, Brooklyn Plomp, Sophie Hendrickson, and Liv Hoppe.

Not to be overlooked is sophomore Ella Del Rosario's season of scoring dominance with 96 goals along with the play of freshmen goalie Adelyn Horciza and field player Finley Graff. "Our freshmen have been huge," Buchel said. "Adelyn has been as good in the goal as anybody in the area. Finley has grown up on the fly coming out of 14 and under water polo. She's thrived and been great offensively and was also willing when called upon to be one of our primary matchups against our opponents' interior players."

Exemplary day for Lamorinda cross country teams

By Jon Kingdon



Acalanes team and coaches

Photos Jon Kingdon



Campolindo's Shea Volkmer crosses the finish line

The conditions today were tough with the runners slipping and sliding all over the place but they definitely hung in there and did what we had to do to advance. We'll just regroup now and hopefully we can put it together a little bit more next week."

The top five finishers for Campolindo boys were Clark Gregory (3), Alex Thomasson (12), Cale Anderson (16), Paulo Trento (17) and Drew Shogan (27).

The leaders for the Campolindo girls were Shea Volkmer, Kate Kabenina and Daisy Penney. "We had a huge step up this year from them as our veteran leaders and today it was a total effort," Lindquist said.

"It was super slippery the whole time," Volkmer said. "I'm really proud of all the girls and I love how we became so bonded this year."

The top five finishers for the Campolindo girls were Volkmer (2), Kabenina (5), Penney (7), Sloan Pullen (9) and Anya Houston (21)



Miramonte boys cross country

On a dreary rainy day, running on a slippery, muddy course at Hayward High School, with the runners finishing the race covered in mud, the Lamorinda boys and girls cross country teams had a stellar day with the Acalanes girls and Campolindo girls and the Miramonte boys and the Campolindo boys all qualifying to run in the California State Meet next Saturday in Clovis, California.

Campolindo Boys and Girls

The Campolindo boys finished in second place and it was freshman Clark Gregory, finishing third overall, who was the first Cougar to cross the finish line. "Clark's been running really well for us so for him to finish in third was not a surprise," coach Andy Lindquist said. "He's been training and racing so well we figured that if he just put himself out there, he would have a great performance and he did."

Big Game Lunch celebrates 51 years

Submitted by John (Jack) Flanagan



Orinda resident, Jerry Wendt (center) sports his Cal Cheerleader Sweater in front of the Cal Band.

Jerry Wendt, one of the first original male Cal cheerleaders, graduated from Cal in 1956 and then started a 50-plus year tradition for an annual Big Game Lunch the Friday prior to the Cal vs Stanford football game. Last Friday, the 51st lunch took place at Metro in Lafayette. Local Cal and Stanford alumni and families celebrated joyfully together as the band performed their music and their moves.

Miramonte Boys

It's been a magical season for the Miramonte Boys, having broken Campolindo's win streak at the DAL tournament and winning the NCS meet and Asher Patel who finished in second looked back to see how far this team had come. "Two years ago, we finished in eighth place and my personal best was less than our number six runner this year," Patel said. "We had an amazing group of runners that did not run cross country last year and this is their first season on the team. I knew we had a good team with Logan Letulle and James Jenkins but I had no idea it was all going to come together so well with our first years and freshmen doing cross country. Everything came together this year and I'm so thankful for the leadership from our head coach Andrew Lewis, Julia Hall, and Cassie Haskell."

The top five finishers for Miramonte were Patel (2), Letulle (6), Jenkins (8), Brenden

Collins (11) and Breydon Collins (23).

Acalanes Girls

With the victory, it was more than just the talent of the Acalanes girls team that was responsible for their success. "This was a really special bunch of girls this year," coach Jeff Hutson said. "They're supportive, collaborative, competitive and passionate with each other."

For Olivia Williams who finished in first as she did two years ago on this course, it was particularly satisfying. "It was so nice to be with the team after cheering for them on the sidelines last year. They're all my best friends and we're all so close and it was great to race with them."

The top five finishers for Acalanes were Williams (1), Nevis Murphy (8), Anju Sekhon (18), Cathryn McCormick (23) and Cameron Powell (26).

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