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Local Squads Set for New Football Landscape

By Karl Buscheck



The Campolindo Cougars hope to repeat their championship ways. Photos Gint Federas

run cross country.

"Probably the two biggest names that we were going to have were Niki Moore and Chris Brahney and we don't have either of those (guys)," Macy said. "And that just throws more weight on Jacob Westphal."

This fall, the Cougars will be competing in the newly-formed Diablo Athletic League, created in a merger between the DFAL and DVAL. Along with Miramonte, Acalanes, Las Lomas, Concord and Clayton Valley Charter, Campolindo is one of six teams that will be playing in the Valley Conference.

"Oh boy," Macy said when asked for his opinion on the new alignment. "Trying to find a polite comment for this thing is hard to find."

The primary gripe for the Cougars - and their Lamorinda neighbors - is that Division I Clayton Valley has been added to the conference. According to MaxPreps, Clayton Valley is ranked the No. 29 team in the state entering the season.

"I'm pretty certain we're the only team in the entire state of California that's got to play its first two league opponents who are going to be state qualifier from the year before," Miramonte head coach Jack Schram said.

Before opening the conference schedule against Clayton Valley at home on Oct. 7, the Mats will play a five-game non-league slate. That begins on Aug. 26 when the Mats visit Vanden in Fairfield.

Like the Cougars, the Mats return a star signal-caller in Tim Teague. Last year, Teague threw for 40 touchdowns and nearly 4,000 yards in 13 games as the Mats went 11-2 overall (5-1 in league).

"When we can get a guy like that who's in our system for two years, it's really beneficial," Schram said.

Campolindo advanced to a state bowl game last year and return star quarterback Jacob Westphal, but on the eve of a new season, the Cougars are facing a major question mark.

"The biggest area we're hurting in is we just don't have linemen," said head coach Kevin Macy. "We can barely find five linemen."

A costly injury has already complicated the search for the reigning NCS champs, who went 14-2 overall and 6-0 in league last season.

"There was one kid we were really counting on - Chris Brahney," Macy explained. "He was going to be our toughest kid and he just broke an ankle and is going to be out for the year."

Brahney isn't the only key contributor the Cougars will have to make do without, as first-team all-league running back Niki Moore has left the team to

Tague and the team's new running backs - Peter Stehr and Sam Walker - should have plenty of help in the trenches.

"I think our offensive line looks solid," Schram said. "So, we'll hope for big things this year."

Acalanes is set to begin its first season under new head coach Floyd Burnsed. The veteran coach, who was most recently in charge of Solano Community College, won five NCS titles during his time at Miramonte.

"We've been so busy - working on fundamentals and technique," said Burnsed, who is taking over for the retired Mike Ivankovich. "(We're) just trying to get the program going. We'd like to keep it rolling kind of with what (Ivankovich) started and keep it going from there."

After the Dons went 4-8 last season (2-4 in league), Burnsed is looking forward to working with his new squad. Acalanes travels to Alhambra to begin the season on Aug. 26.

"I haven't actually seen them play (a game) yet," Burnsed explained of his new team. "But I know our quarterback's been a good leader for us - a kid name Robby Rowell."

Burnsed plans to use the non-league portion of the schedule to install new defensive and offensive schemes in advance of challenging DAL season.

"We're in a very tough league with Clayton Charter and Concord and, of course, Campolindo and Miramonte and Las Lomas," Burnsed said. "So, they're all very good quality teams."

In his first year with the Dons, Burnsed will be leaning heavily on his seasoned defense.

"I think our defense will be very good," Burnsed said. "We have a lot of returning players on defense - two linebackers, our secondary. So, hopefully our defense will be experienced and play well."



The Miramonte Matadors football team gets into shape for the new season.



The Acalanes Dons will lean heavily on their defense.

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[back](#)

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