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Boys soccer recap

By Jon Kingdon



Gavin Pitt (Miramonte) Photos Gint Federas

Having lost to Bishop O'Dowd in last years NCS playoff game and having defeated that same team in the regular season, Miramonte head coach Masood Ahmadi had to feel optimistic as they confronted Bishop O'Dowd once again in this year's NCS championship. Unfortunately Ahmadi was unable to match his counterpart Marco Plascencia, losing decisively 4-0.

Still, as Miramonte heads into the next round of playoffs, the Matadors have to feel positive about their season despite their last game. With a 17-3-2 overall record, 8-1-1 in league play, there should be few complaints.

With 12 shutouts during the regular season, the Matadors leaned heavily on their defense. Senior defensemen Sam Pinto and Ben Andrews, both of whom led the team in minutes played with 1,665 and 1,687 minutes played, respectively, provided a wall of protection for goalie Cole Kelez who averaged six saves a game, giving up only 14 goals in 22 games.

Leading the offense with six goals each were seniors Gavin Pitt, Owen Reed and junior Charlie McIntyre. Senior Andrew Byrne was the clear leader on the team in assists with eight.

With a 17-8-1 overall record and losing to the eventual NCS champion Bishop O'Dowd in the playoffs, Acalanes head coach Paul Curtis came away with a positive feeling about his team: "It was a strong season. We played well down the stretch and ended up second in the league to a team that made it to the finals."

Senior, Alex Topping, a three-year starter was named the most valuable player on offense in the league. Says Curtis: "Alex did a great job in marshaling the offense to generate a lot of goals."

Travis Stevenson and Chris Rogers were also named first team all-league. Stevenson's versatility proved to be very valuable to the Dons, says Curtis appreciatively: "Travis focused on offense this year though at times we had to move him to defense due to injuries and he did so without missing a beat playing alongside Chris who was the leader of the defensive unit."

Besides Stevenson and Rogers returning next year, Bernard Adri and Nick Geannacopulos will also be counted on. Geannacopulos flashed his talent on offense when given the opportunity but had to miss time due to injuries.

Keeping his perspective, Curtis took great pleasure in coaching this team: "There was a real camaraderie among the team members. They were very respectful of each other. Life isn't soccer; soccer is a part of life and the boys did a nice job of helping each other to manage the season."

With a 6-13-4 record, Campolindo head coach Aaron Girard saw this as a rebuilding season: "I think we have to take the season in perspective. It was the youngest team in the history of the program. We only fielded 2-3 seniors each game. Under the circumstances, I was very proud of the way we fought and battled."

Despite their record, Campolindo was competitive in most games, scoring 32 goals while giving up 37 goals. Says Girard: "9 of our 13 losses were by one goal. We were just missing that little intangible you need for success. It's the little details that matter and make the difference which was a good lesson for the players and coaches."

Playing top competition is one thing but according to Girard, Campolindo had the strongest schedule of the 26 teams in Division II in the North Coast.

With 17 of the 21 players on the roster returning, Girard feels they should not have the problems they had this past season standing in against the bigger teams.

The success of the football team kept two key players, senior goalie Lucas Allen and Seppi Ortman (4 goals), off the team for the first third of the season. Allen's departure will leave a big hole in goal says Girard: "Lucas brought an awesome attitude to the team. I would match him up with any goalie we played against. He was all the more impressive in that he also plays baseball and is focused on soccer only three

months a year. Seppi did a great job on offense battling through a foot injury."

Jose Carra-Hernandez led the team with 11 goals and according to Girard was "outstanding in setting the tempo of the game. Still Girard is looking for more offensively: "We will be searching for someone to have the ability to put the ball in the net consistently, someone to step up at the forward position to take control of the offense."

Returning to lead the defense is sophomore Jamiel Liu. Says Girard: "Jamiel was very strong on defense. He was very tough and did not back down from anybody. He played like a boss."

Girard is confident things will be much smoother next year: "We were a new staff this year. Knowing my players from the start of the season will facilitate things next season. We will be able to hit the ground running."



Alex Topping (Acalanes)



Seppi Ortman (Campolindo)

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