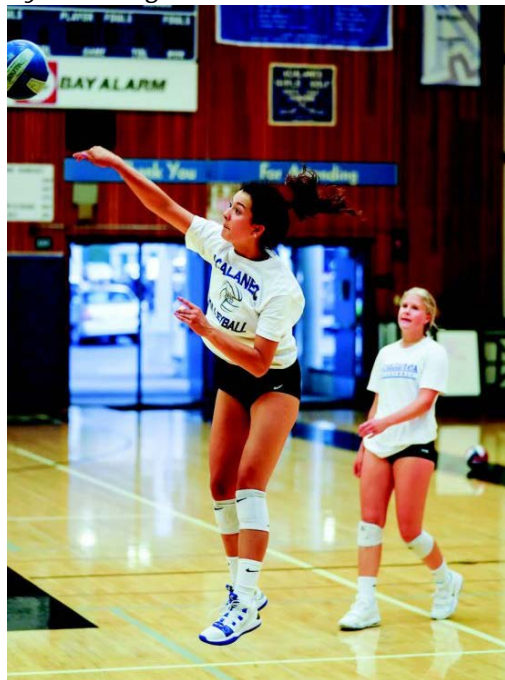


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Rookie coaches and a veteran leading Lamorinda Volleyball

By Jon Kingdon



Madi Risch, Acalanes Photos Gint Federas

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All three Lamorinda girls' volleyball teams are coming off successful seasons. Campolindo (27-9) made it to the second round of the state playoffs, Miramonte made it to the third round of the state playoffs and Acalanes (17-14) lost in the fourth round of the NCS championships. John Vuong will be entering his eighth season as Campolindo's head coach having a composite won-loss record of 197-68. The records for Acalanes' head coach Haley Glass and Miramonte's head coach Lindsay Ray are a composite 0-0.

Acalanes

Glass, who played for and graduated from Portland State, has been a head coach for the 13-year-old girls for the club team at Xceleration Volleyball, is excited about her opportunity at Acalanes: "I'm incredibly lucky for this to be my first head coaching job with this group of girls."

Glass, who is familiar with the area having graduated from Las Lomas High School ("I'm getting a lot of grief from my family"), has a team with both experience and youth. Senior Madi Risch is the team's top returning player, having been named first team all-conference last year.

Along with a core group of seniors, Glass anticipates playing a number of underclassmen: "Junior Annika Olson is moving to the outside from the inside

and is learning the dynamics of a new position. She took the lead this summer bringing the team together. (Sophomore) Aly Kirke, who played on the JV team last year, will be on the right side and should be a factor on the offense."

On defense, Glass is relying on two juniors, Sydney Sowarby and Daisy Sibley, to lead the group: "Sydney has been great and fun to watch and Daisy is going to be a factor here as well. The libero position is still not set but I have four strong options to fill that position."

Glass' plan is for an aggressive, physical group: "I want us to be a scrappy team giving a lot of effort. Our players will be willing to roll off the court and go into the bleachers to save balls. That's the mentality our players are going to have."

Miramonte

Miramonte head coach Lindsay Ray brings a great deal of experience to the team, having been an assistant coach at UC East Bay and also at the Xceleration Club, and her first impressions of her players have been favorable: "All the girls are very dedicated and working hard. They are coachable and very passionate about the sport."

Miramonte lost four key players last year but Ray has a number of underclassmen that she will be counting on to step up as starters: "Sophomore Natalie Kurtz will be a big this year in the middle. Freshman Amber Chu is an all-around player that will be an outside hitter. (Senior) Julie Martin is going to be our other outside hitter. Our whole offense as a group has been working together very well."

On defense, junior Haley Lim was fourth on the team in digs last year and will be the team's libero. Junior Jenna Foster is the backup libero and will play defensive specialist as well. Senior Audrey French is the team's setter and was second on the team in assists last year: "Audrey has taken on the leadership role, communicating well with her teammates, finding out how to give her teammates good sets," says Ray.

As a graduate and former player at Cal State East Bay and coach at Xceleration, Ray is able to empathize with her players: "I have high expectations but the girls are young and still learning so patience is the key. We're basically keeping everything the same but we have added a couple of new things and putting our own style to it."

It is something of a family affair for the Matadors. Lindsay Ray's assistant varsity coach and JV coach is her older sister, Leslie, who was her head coach in college and who is the club director at Xceleration.

Lindsay is keeping it simple as a first-time head coach: "I haven't challenged the players as much at this point. I'm still testing the waters. We just have to work hard. That's what I want from my players and for them to have a good time."

Campolindo

Campolindo head coach John Vuong, who came on board in 2012, says, "I feel like an old timer now." The consistent success that Campolindo has shown on the court has attracted a number of players to try out for the team. "We have 16 girls on our varsity and 12 girls each on the JV and freshman teams. We had to

cut a number of players."

With two 3-0 victories over Amador Valley and Foothill, Campolindo has taken up where they left off last year. Having lost only three seniors to graduation, the Cougars have returned a core of experienced players. "We're a young team," says Vuong. "There are lots of juniors and some seniors and a lot of young kids."

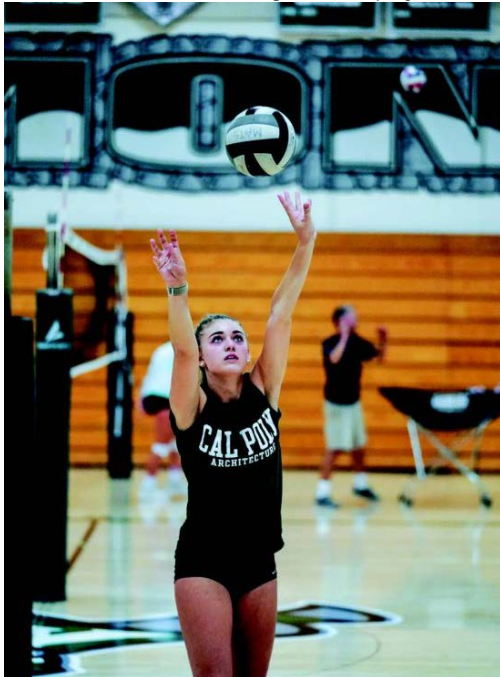
The team is led by senior setter Audrey Pak, who will be playing for UCLA next year. Pak has been a four-year starter for Vuong: "Audrey is a very good athlete. I saw this in her as a freshman. She has shown great growth and maturity. She could be an outside hitter for us if we wanted to play her there."

Sophia Newman was first team all-league last year and is a key player for the offense. Erin Thomas, who was second team all-league as a sophomore is providing good height in the middle. Junior outside hitter Kate Dendinger has stood out as well, says Vuong: "Kate has grown a lot and improved a lot. She played a lot in the offseason and we're looking for a lot out of her this year."

The defense is led by junior libero Brianna Lee. Senior defensive specialist Arielle Allen brings a lot of experience to the back line. Freshman Olivia Wiseman, is playing for Campolindo for the first time but is no stranger to Vuong: "I've known Olivia since she was a lot younger from the club team."

The Cougars have become victims of their success as they are being pushed up to Division I for the NCS playoffs. Though not backing down, Vuong resignedly says, "It's tough for a small school like us going against schools with three and four thousand students."

Vuong says that this team does not have the height his previous teams have had: "To be successful, our defense has to be very effective. Communication is also a key. If we can use good ball control on offense, we'll be fine. The girls have played in the same system. They know what we run."



Audrey French, Miramonte Photo Gint Federas



Audrey Pak, Campolindo Photo Gint Federas

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