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Acalanes breaks Miramonte girls' water polo winning streak at 75

By Jon Kingdon



Acalanes water polo team after victory over Miramonte. Photo Sarah Graff

It was on April 10, 2021, when the Miramonte girls' water polo team broke Acalanes' winning streak of 59 games. Turnabout was fair play for Acalanes head coach Misha Buchel, the losing coach in that game was the coach who broke Miramonte's 75 game winning streak by a score of 9-8 on Sept. 27. Buchel studied Miramonte film prior to the game. "Miramonte plays a very unique style of offense," Buchel said. "If you don't prepare, and understand that to a point, you're going to have a steep learning curve in the game. We wanted our players to understand what they wanted to do and how we needed to defend it. We were beating them to the spot a lot and we saw them getting called for a ton of offensive fouls as they were trying to swim through us." The Dons respected but were not intimidated by Miramonte with their having lost nine graduates that are playing in college now. "Miramonte is still a very good team but without the depth that they had last year, they were not able to wear us out," Buchel said. The Dons were led by

Ella Del Rosario (3 goals, 2 assists), Brooklyn Plomp (3 goals 1 assist) and Wendy Heffelfinger (3 goals, 2 assists). "They all played a huge part against a team that is hard to score against," Buchel said. "Brooklyn and Wendy are normally our key defenders but against Miramonte that didn't always work out that way because they move so much. It had to be a complete team effort because they're not just a one-woman team." Miramonte had six different scorers - Tali Stryker (2 goals, 2 assists), Alison Sagara (2 goals, 1 assist), Ally Larsen (1 goal, 1 assist), Rosalie Hassett (1 goal, 1 assist), Bea Hearey (1 goal), Mira Haldar (1 goal), and Audrina Kang (1 assist). Acalanes goalie Adelyn Horciza had 10 saves. "Adelyn was magnificent in the game," Buchel said. "Our perimeter defense was excellent but when they did break us down, she was a wall for us back there." After Heffelfinger scored the go-ahead goal late in the game, Buchel called timeout when Acalanes got the ball back. "I reminded them that we needed to make sure that we did not have any surprise turnovers and to not be careless with the ball, and down the stretch the girls executed perfectly. After the game, the Miramonte girls were very classy in the handshake line and John Roemer was very complimentary to me and our team." Without missing a beat, Miramonte has already begun a new streak, winning their next two games against Clovis North (Fresno) 11-8 and Clovis 18-14. Once again the teams in Lamorinda have proved to be a dominant force: Miramonte (15-1), Campolindo (14-3) and Acalanes (14-3). The rivalry is great and in a sense the teams are their own worst enemies: Miramonte's only loss was to Acalanes, Campolindo's only three losses were against Miramonte and two of Acalanes's losses came against Campolindo.

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