

Lamorinda Basketball Prepares for End of Season

By Conrad Bassett



In addition to being a leading scorer, senior captain Sophie Taylor (#20) has adopted a role as a distributor. Photo Kevin Nguyen



Molly Martin #13 Photo Kevin Nguyen

The last two weeks in local high school basketball have brought a better focus to the upcoming North Coast Section playoff picture. There was only one Lamorinda rivalry game, a doubleheader between Campolindo and Acalanes on January 31.

The girls' opened the night and the visiting Dons' looked to avenge their early season loss

to the Cougars. However, the Cougars won 59-44.

Acalanes' senior Olivia Murphy opened the scoring with a short bank. The teams exchanged baskets before Dons' junior Marie Paladino hit a three for a 7-6 lead.

Campolindo responded with a 13-2 run to end the period. Following the run, Acalanes never got closer than ten points the rest of the way.

With the win, the Cougars became playoff eligible for the NCS.

In the subsequent week, Acalanes fell to second place Dougherty Valley, 75-31, on February 3 and beat Alhambra, 55-37, on February 7. Acalanes is now 4-6 and 14-10 overall.

Coach Chris Russell has been pleased with his team's play. "Junior Molly Martin has been playing huge and more consistent lately. Senior Captain Sophie Taylor has become more of a distributor lately as teams are constantly sending double teams at her, but she is still probably the league's leading scorer."

Following the win, Campolindo had a bye. The time off did not slow them down and they easily defeated Las Lomas, 75-24. The Cougars dropped their next game to Dougherty Valley, 61-48, to fall to 6-4 in the DFAL and 11-12 overall.

Cougar head coach Elgin Leslie continues to be upbeat. "Our goal all year long has been to get better with each game, we did a much better job against Dougherty Valley this time around," he said.

Crosstown rival Miramonte crushed Dublin 93-62 led by sophomore Brienna Alford's monster double-double of 18 points and 16 rebounds. The Mats followed up with an 84-53 drubbing of Alhambra.

Miramonte escaped a near-loss against Dougherty Valley, to win 64-62. Miramonte

trailed for much of the first half and then took a ten point lead before the Wildcats came back to tie it with seconds to go.

Coach Kelly Sopak noted, "It was a great game that ended with a spectacular individual play by Devon McDonald. We received contribution all throughout our line up on both ends of the floor."

Miramonte is still perfect at 10-0 and 24-0.

The boys' competition continued to be a struggle.

Campolindo has continued to hold onto first place by eeking out a win against Acalanes. The Cougars came from behind to defeat the Dons, 75-72 on January 31.

Acalanes jumped off to an 18-15 lead after one quarter, but the Cougars came back to take the lead at the half by one. Acalanes extended their lead in the third. Campo roared back with a 27-point fourth period to run their DFAL record to 8-0.

Acalanes bounced back with two wins, a

62-60 road win over Dougherty Valley and a 74-47 win over Alhambra. The Dons are now 4-6, 15-9.

Campolindo headed over to Las Lomas and saw their perfect DFAL season end in overtime as the Knights prevailed 67-64. Their tough week was further compounded as they were upset in overtime by Dougherty Valley, 73-61. The Cougars losses drop them to 8-2, 20-4.

Meanwhile, Miramonte beat Dublin 61-56 on January 31 and continued its winning ways the following Friday night beating upstart Alhambra, 73-63. Kiran Shastri unloaded for 34 points to lead the Mats. They continued their win streak at Dougherty Valley winning 53-37. The Mats are now 7-3, 17-7.

Acalanes played host to Miramonte on Tuesday, February 14 after press time. Campolindo will play Miramonte on February 16 at 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. The first round of the North Coast Section tournament begins on February 21 and 22.



Senior Griffin Piatt (#3) goes up for a shot against defender Kevin Huber (#2) in Campolindo's 75-72 win. Photo Kevin Nguyen

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