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Lady Mats Dominate DFAL Play

By Simon Tryzna



Carly Gill #13 Photos Kevin Nguyen

After posting a 31-2 record last season and advancing to the state championship game, the Miramonte Matadors have reloaded and are once again proving themselves the team to beat. The Mats are 14-1 overall and 3-0 in DFAL play.

In preseason play, the Mats were the runner-up in the Nike Tournament of Champions in Phoenix and took home the championship at the Bay Area's West Coast Jamboree. They were named fifth best team by Cal-Hi Sports.

"There are a lot of good teams ahead of us, and a lot of good teams behind us," said Miramonte's head coach Kelly Sopak on the ranking.

With the high ranking come high expectations and the Mats did not disappoint as they dismantled the visiting Knights of Las Lomas 90-20 in their league opener Jan. 7. Two days later, the Mats traveled to Acalanes and had no problem with the host Dons, winning 81-20.

Led by senior point guard Carly Gill, Miramonte used a barrage of three pointers and stifling defense to race out to a 20-0 lead that would extend to 50-8 at half-time.

Knowing that any team can be upset any night, and keeping in mind that No. 25 in the country Cardoniet was upset by Monte Vista just the night before, Sopak wanted to make a statement.

"This is a league game," said Sopak. "The kids just come in and they know it's one game at a time and they do

a really good job of that. It doesn't mean anything if you are a favorite. It's high school basketball."

After a competitive third quarter, Miramonte outscored Acalanes 15-2 to take home the 81-20 win.

The Dons are missing Molly Martin, a player who coach Chris Russell described as a "walking double-double." Martin is out for the season with a knee injury.

"We've had some injury issues as well as some self-inflicted things that have kept us from not quite playing our best basketball during the preseason," said Russell. "I thought we played a really soft schedule and should have won a minimum of ten games heading into league instead of being 7-7."

Despite the blowout loss, Russell found this to be a good lesson for his team. "This game is just to make us tougher and better for games that we should win," he explained. "I think we should challenge everyone else just fine."

Miramonte took on Campolindo Jan. 11. The Cougars played a tough preseason schedule as well and provided the toughest competition the Mats have faced in league play this season. While the Mats used their stifling full-court press to cause Campo turnovers, they were plagued by poor shooting, which allowed Campolindo to hang in the game.

However, whenever the Cougars got a basket and some momentum, the Mats quickly pushed the ball up court and scored a basket of their own. Freshman guard Keanna Delos Santos led the way for the Mats, who led 42-21 at the half and wound up winning the game, 79-48.

Despite the loss, Campolindo coach Elgin Leslie was proud of the way his team played and strongly believes his team has what it takes to finish close to the top of the league standings.

"We have the goal of improving with each game, and I think we have done that," said Leslie. "Every game presents a tough challenge, so we must keep improving to keep pace with the teams in our league."

The next rivalry game is on Jan. 22 when Campolindo hosts Acalanes at 7 p.m.



Kenna Delos Santos #11

Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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