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## Miramonte Splits Rivalry Series

By Michael Sakoda



Kiran Shastri #21 Photo Kevin Nguyen

Boys' basketball DFAL play began last week with two rivalry games for the Lamorinda schools. Acalanes (6-10) played host to Miramonte (8-8) on Jan. 9 and then on Friday, Jan. 11, Miramonte traveled to take on Campo (11-4).

The Mats split the rivalry series. They earned the 61-47 win against the Dons, but dropped their match-up against the Cougars, 54-66.

Prior to the matchup, Acalanes head coach Darrell Hirashima said his team has struggled this year. "The guys are still learning how to execute under pressure," he commented. "We need to be able to run our offense, play hard-nosed defense, and that hasn't always happened."

Another factor in the Dons' struggle is that junior center Buster Souza has been the focus of most defenses throughout the preseason. "He's always going against two, sometimes three guys," Hirashima explained.

The match-up against Miramonte was no exception.

"Acalanes has a really nice center in Buster Souza, and we played a team defense against him," Miramonte head coach Drew McDonald noted after the game.

"This was a big win for us," said McDonald. "...we had good performances from a number of our guys...across the board we had a nice team effort."

Miramonte traveled to take on Campo just two days later.

The Mats controlled through much of the first half, scoring six unanswered points to start the game, and led 17-10 after the first quarter. Through the second quarter, the teams traded baskets, getting 10 points each from Campo's sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly (18 total), and Mats' senior forward Kiran Shastri (19 total).

With just under a minute to play in the half, Cougar senior Matt McCue drew a charge forcing Shastri to the bench with his third foul. A few plays later, McCue scored off a Jack Evans steal, cutting the Miramonte lead to two.

At the half, the Cougars trailed 30-26. "We didn't give up our composure, and we stayed with what we do," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson.

Campo opened the second half on a 13-0 run. Miramonte's subsequent 6-0 run was silenced by a three from O'Reilly.

The Cougars led 47-39 heading into the fourth. Miramonte returned to their first half execution about midway through the quarter, and cut the Campo lead to six with under a minute to play, but the Cougars held on, beating the Mats 66-54.

"This group has struggled with patience all year," McDonald said of Campo's second half burst. "(Campo) picked up their pace...our shot selection got worse, and the tempo got away from us."

"We needed to be fundamentally sound," said Watson after the game. "I gave them an earful at halftime, and they responded."

With 10 games to go in the season, all three teams are looking good. Acalanes notched its sixth win Friday against Dougherty Valley, Campo's tough preseason seems to be paying dividends, and Miramonte is working Kiran Shastri back into the rotation. He missed the last month with tendonitis in his knee.

Rivalry games resume on Jan. 22 when Acalanes faces Campolindo at 5:30 p.m.



Matt McCue #45 Photo Andy Scheck



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