

Soccer Season Underway

Big Rivalry Match This Week

By Marissa Harnett

Just as surely as winter blows in, so does the high school soccer season. Training since mid-November, the season is just getting underway. Preceded by only one pre-season tournament, league play began on Dec. 11.

In boys' soccer, Campolindo is off to a hot start, winning the Winter Soccer Classic, Silver Division, on Dec. 7. After an erratic start last season, Campo hit a groove and surged to reach the NCS finals finishing the season 18-8-2 overall (7-4-1 in league).

Despite their strong finish last year, the team lacked confidence going into this season. "Although we got better last year as the season went along and completely exceeded expectations, the sting of finishing second in everything (Winter Soccer Classic, DFAL and NCS) definitely carried into the offseason and into this season," head coach Shane Carney explained. "It was hard for us to enjoy our unexpected success last year when we kept coming up just short."

The Dec. 7 win helped Campo solidify their confidence. Adding to their momentum, the Cougars also nabbed their first two league games against Las Lomas and Alhambra.

As last season's DFAL winner, Acalanes is arguably Campo's biggest rival. Finishing the 2012-2013 season with an overall record of 23-1-3 (11-0-2 in league), the Dons have consistently produced strong results and have earned the NCS title four times in five years.

However, a bumpy start to the 2013-2014 season finds the Dons fighting to regain traction. The Winter Classic produced disappointing results as the Dons went 1-2-1. A 2-1 loss to Alhambra followed in their league opener last Wednesday.

Still, head coach Paul Curtis is not worried. "The roster has 23 boys and they are working hard to come together as a single cohesive and productive unit," he explained. "This year, there are a significant number of new players on the varsity team and so that process will take some time," Curtis continued. He views the results as

an "opportunity for growth and improvement." Acalanes has seen major personnel turnover including graduating 25 players over two years. Also for the first time ever, three freshmen earned spots on the varsity roster. Curtis feels good about the season ahead – the Dons overcame Dublin in their second league game, perhaps signaling an upward trend – as well as in the coming years noting the deep young talent and particularly strong freshman team. "It bodes well for the future of the program," he said.

Miramonte, who has struggled with consistency and continuity over the last few years, performed well at the Winter Classic finishing with a 2-1-1 record and a third place trophy in the Bronze Division.

New head coach Billal Samy is excited to take the helm at Miramonte, a task that comes with many challenges. Second to battling injuries, helping players move from club soccer to high school is a significant hurdle. The short pre-season along with ability differentials make high school soccer a difficult transition.

Samy is up to the task though. "If the proper training environment is implemented, players of different backgrounds/abilities may have a better chance to put forth a strong, collective and competitive effort," he explained.

Samy is happy with the results so far, logging six goals for and only three against in the opening tournament. Although the Mats fell to Dougherty Valley in their season opener, Samy is confident. "We definitely have the personnel to compete at this level," he said.

As the fourth coach in as many years, Samy has simple aspirations. "My goal is to prepare the team to compete," he stated. "NCS is always a target, but developing players and planting the seeds for the next few years is the first goal."

Upcoming rivalry action at 6:15 p.m.:

- Friday, Dec. 20 Acalanes @ Campolindo
- Friday, Jan. 10 Acalanes @ Miramonte
- Wednesday, Jan. 15 Miramonte @ Campolindo



Dons earned their first DFAL win over Dublin last Friday.

Photo Gint Federas

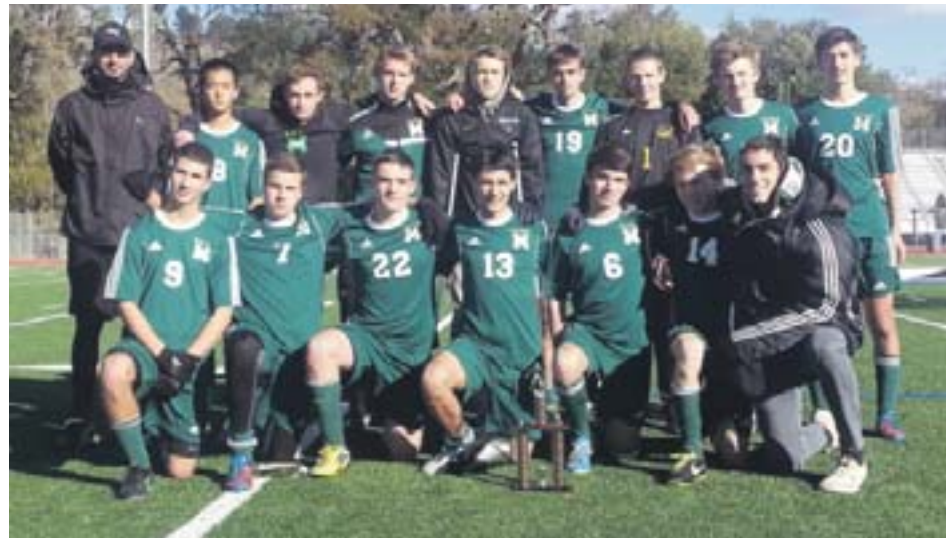


Campolindo is 2-0 after defeating Alhambra last Friday.

Photo Gint Federas

Mats Finish Third in Winter Classic

Submitted by Jeanne Woodlee



Back row, from left: Billal Samy, Joe Wang, Jake Woodlee, Ryan See, Sam Conklin, Reece Roberts, Garrett Johnson, Henry Hodder, Gabe Sloan; front row: Coleman Fine, Spencer Hardwick, Clay Haskell, Aaron Roybal, Clark Jordan, Ben Hodder, Jarrett Visher; not pictured: David Basili, Michael Basili, Asher Kalman, Connor McDonald, Ruwan Thilakarathne, Kyle Visher Photo provided

Miramonte boys' varsity soccer finished in third place at the Winter Classic Soccer Tournament. The team had several absent players and even had to forfeit the first game. However, once on the field, the Mats

were tough competition. Led by new coach Billal Samy, Miramonte tied against Mission San Jose 2-2, defeated Berean Christian 4-0 and defeated Irvington, 1-0, the rescheduled forfeit match.

Miramonte Girls' Basketball Strong as Ever

Campo, Acalanes look to unseat

By Conrad Bassett



Megan Reid



Nadine Maserweh

The 2012-2013 girls basketball season brought much attention to Lamorinda as the Miramonte Matadors went through a second straight undefeated Diablo-Foothill Athletic League season on their way to a spectacular 27-3 record. Miramonte again looks like the top favorite, but Acalanes and Campolindo are looking for the upset.

This year, Miramonte returns their entire team from last year, except graduated, four-year player, Carly Gill. Head coach Kelly Sopak notes that she will be hard to replace.

"Sometimes, we have to realize that people are not replaceable. Carly provided too much for one person to replace her. We simply will all have to step up to fill that void, including our coaching staff."

Sopak certainly has those tools—seniors Megan Reid, Bree Alford, Nadine Maserweh and Allison Miller return as does junior Kaitlin Fenn and sophomores Sabrina Ionescu, Keana Delos Santos, Jesse Wilson and Uriah Howard.

Sopak added, "Masarweh has improved tremendously since last season and will likely start this year."

Newcomers include freshman Elle Louie and senior Mariah Seals.

Those who saw the team play last year will note that Sopak freely substituted and there were always fresh players on the court.

"We will carry 11 on varsity and all 11 players will play," said Sopak. "I hate to compare teams but I have never felt more comfortable with my entire roster as I do this season. We may have a starting lineup for the sake of having one, but I look at it as if we have 11 starters. They are all unique and bring something different to the court but I could not tell you on any given night who is going to carry us."

And as always they will have a challenging schedule including traveling out of state twice—to the NIKE TOC in Phoenix and to Gillette, Wyo. to play in the Energy Classic.

Over in Lafayette, the Acalanes Dons have a new varsity coach, Chad Wellon, who will be looking to improve on last year's team that struggled to an overall 12-14 record.

He knows the players as he coached the

Dons' freshman team last year.

Wellon has a young team with only two seniors—Ariel Padua and Krista Federas.

Wellon said, "So far Julia Lyons, a sophomore point guard and team captain, has really taken on a leadership role and has been a consistent scorer for us."

Wellon added that his young team will also be helped by a freshman. "Another player to watch out for is Roni Marrone, freshman forward. She also has been a consistent scorer and contributor over the first part of our season."

So far, the Dons are off to a good start. They opened the season with three wins in their first four games, and they will be playing most of their pre-season games locally.

Campolindo is also starting the season with a new head coach. Art Thoms is moving up from the assistant position in the Cougar program. Campo went 25-6 a year ago with only two DFAL losses, both to Miramonte, and went as far as the Nor-Cal semi-finals. They lost three starters to graduation including Laura Hickey and Courtney Seyranian.

"Laura and Courtney were great players and leaders last season. We also graduated a third starter, Rachel Riddle. It will be hard to replace them," Thoms said.

Still the Cougars do bring back some depth. "Seniors Ashley Ewing and Meagan Adachi are returning starters from last year and Sierra Regan is a senior and has earned a starting position," Thoms explained. "Ashley, Meagan and Sierra were voted team captains and we will look to them for leadership."

"Freshman Brooke Panfili will step into a starting guard role," added Thoms.

The Cougars will also stay local playing several non-league games and playing in the West Coast Jamboree along with Acalanes.

All coaches agreed that the entire DFAL will be a solid league again this year. Dublin won 21 games last season and has won their first three games this year. Dougherty Valley has a solid history. Las Lomas and Alhambra should be improved as well.

Wellon summed it up, "Every game will be tough!"

DFAL regular season begins on Jan. 7



Julia Lyons



Krista Federas



Ashley Ewing



Meagan Adachi