

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Lamorinda Softball Teams Starting to Take Off

By Karl Buscheck



Photos Gint Federas

All three Lamorinda softball squads are rounding into form as the DFAL season ramps up.

On April 16, two of those teams faced off as Campolindo cruised to a 14-4 win over Miramonte thanks to a dominant pitching performance from Charlotte McNeil and a 15-hit barrage from the lineup.

"That's how we drew it up in the locker room," joked head coach Wayne Stephens. As Stephens put it, McNeil has just been "dealing" for the Cougars this season.

At the plate, shortstop Danielle Thomas and second baseman Ashley Thoms propelled the offense. Thoms clubbed a home run to left field, while Thomas nearly went deep, as well.

The home win over Miramonte pushed the Cougars back to .500 (2-2) in league play (6-10 overall) after a wobbly start caused in part by the absence of a few key cogs who were taking part in the basketball playoffs.

With a 0-4 record in DFAL action (5-8 overall), the Mats are still searching for the team's first league win. Following the defeat to the Cougars, head coach Steve Renfro dished out praise for the rivals.

"I think the other team just played good ball," said Renfro. "They were

hitting the ball well. You have to give it up to them."

As Miramonte moves through the schedule, Renfro knows there are plenty of improvements that need to be made.

"All of it," said Renfro when asked what particular aspect the team needs to focus on the most. "It starts from pitching, outfield, infield, hitting. It all needs to be worked on. Just progress. Just keep progressing. Hopefully by the end of the season it starts to come together a little bit more."

Acalanes is definitely starting to come together. Like Campolindo, the Dons were missing crucial pieces while the basketball and softball seasons overlapped. On April 14, the Dons were finally back at 100 percent and the team promptly handed Dublin an 11-0 beatdown at home.

"All year we haven't had our team together, and that was the first game that we had everyone there," said head coach Victor Silva. "So, that was the best part. I think it showed the girls what they're capable of when we have our whole team there."

Acalanes, who is now 1-2 in league and 3-5 overall, has been getting quality innings from its pitching

staff and has also been relying heavily on a couple of stars in the infield: "We have two of the best players in the league with [shortstop] Zoe Marrott and [first baseman] Kaitlyn Johnson," said Silva.

The Dons also have great chemistry. "In the 11 years I've been coaching softball, this team, they all get along, everybody rooting for everybody," Silva explained. "They have each other's back and I don't think I've ever had so much fun as with this team. So, I just hope we can just continue this. Keep this roll going"

Silva thinks he has the kind of team that could make history. Acalanes has never won an NCS title, but Silva thinks this team might have a shot. "That was the goal when I took this job and I was beginning to wonder if I was ever going to live long enough to finish it. But I really think we have the players this year if everybody stays healthy."

With three wins in the past four game, the Dons are definitely trending in the right direction.

"I guess the best part of this team is we seem to get better with every game," said Silva. "That's the fun part."

Aquanuts Host National Championship, Win Events

Submitted by Linda Bowers



From left, first row: Remy Mink, Daria Torba (Orinda), Caoimhe Gallahue; second row: Kyra Hoevertz, Gillian Brassil (Moraga), Elizabeth Wiita; third row: Mandie Stanton, Priyanka Khaware, Renee Stehlik, Natalie Fletcher, Johanna Langner (Lafayette); fourth row: Haley Watson, Lucy Bautista, Cataline Nadelcu, Dana Drury

The most prestigious synchronized swimming competition in the nation took place April 1-4 at the Soda Aquatic Center in Moraga. Over 350 athletes from all over the US, Canada and Puerto Rico traveled to the East Bay for the week-long competition, held here for the first time in 20 years. The USA Synchro event was co-hosted by the Walnut Creek Aquanauts and the Santa Clara Aquanauts and cov-

ered three championships: the U.S. Senior National Championships, the U.S. Junior National Championships and the 13/15 National Championships.

The Walnut Creek Aquanauts stunned the audience and earned gold in the combo free (82.1667 points). The team is made up of athletes from Lamorinda, including Gillian Brassil (Moraga), Johanna Langner (Lafayette), and Dorai Torba (Orinda).

For the Junior Championships, WCA earned second place in the Junior High Point Team competition. Brassil received second place in the Junior Individual High Point. In the Duet, Walnut Creek swimmers won silver and bronze, with Brassil and Wiita finishing second (76.9000), and Drury and Langner, taking third (75.8333).

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