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Campo Boys and Miramonte Girls Come Up Short in NCS Soccer Finals

By Karl Buscheck



Amir Aliakbari (10) and Seppi Ortman (5)

Both the Campo boys and the Miramonte girls ended up on the wrong side of the scoreline in their respective NCS title tilts on Feb. 27.

"Losing in the final hurts more than getting knocked out early (on) or even missing the playoffs, so it was an emotional end to an amazing season," Campo head coach Shane Carney admitted after his Cougars lost 2-0 to De Anza in the NCS Division II final in Moraga.

"The emotional part of all of us is disappointed we didn't finish the dream," Carney explained. "But the logical view of the season is of a season where a true team formed and put in hard work night in and night out to completely exceed expectations."

Campo, who wrapped up the 2015-16 campaign with a 17-4-6 record (8-1-3 in DFAL), arrived in the championship after consecutive shootout wins in the quarter and semi-finals. The extra-time triumphs were thrilling, but also proved exhausting for the Cougars.

"I think if we had played De Anza in an earlier round, we probably would have been ready to keep up," Carney said. "But honestly I just think the legs were gone after a very tough season and grueling playoff run with back-to-back overtime games before the final. They're a great team and deserved to win, but unfortunately, I don't think we were able to put our best effort out there."



Kelly McKeen (16)

While Campo advanced to the biggest stage thanks to a couple of rounds of penalty-kick dramatics, the Miramonte girls stormed into the NCS Division III final.

Before losing to Branson 1-0 at Marin Catholic, the Mats roared past the opposition by a combined score of 11-2 in the first three playoff clashes.

"I am very impressed by that number but not surprised at all," head coach Mark Daus said. "If you look at our games throughout the year statistically we outshot our opponents in almost every game by three to four times. As the year went on we were starting to get rewarded for creating all of those opportunities. Whether it may be our goal scorers getting more

comfortable in front of the net or if it was the soccer gods finally shinning down on us I was just glad the girls started to build their confidence and score."

Against Branson, the opportunities were there once again, but the soccer gods refused to shine down on the Mats.

"As for the game itself, Branson was firing on all cylinders and didn't let up their pressure the entire first half and they capitalized on their one true opportunity they had," Daus said. "Again they didn't log a shot on goal until the second half and only had four shots total for the game compared to our 16."

In the aftermath of the finals de-



Gina Crosetti (9)

feat, Daus dished out lofty praise for a pair of the Mats senior pillars.

"Gina Crosetti and Kelly McKeen defined what it meant to be captains this season," Daus said. "They not only lead their team with their play on the field but they took leadership off the field as well and made sure everyone was on the same page."

The head coach also commended the rest of the squad. They finished 9-7-4 overall with a 4-4-4 mark in league play.

"I was very proud of our girls and thought they played beautiful soccer and were very hard to play against," Daus said. "But credit to Branson and their defense to not break and hold a clean sheet and win NCS."

Photos Gint Federas

Mats Fall to Moreau in NCS final, Earn CIF Division III Berth

By Spencer Silva



Ethan Fishler

Photo Gint Federas

It was raining threes at McKeon Pavilion (St. Mary's College) on Saturday night (March 5), during the boys' Division III NCS Championship game.

Unfortunately for the Miramonte Matadors (19-10), the downpour was mostly one-sided. The No. 1 seed Moreau Catholic Mariners (25-4) felled the Mats by a lopsided score of 98-67.

The underdog Matadors were aggressive early, stealing passes and transitioning for quick baskets, but it was only a matter of time before the Mariners' sharpshooting placed a permanent wedge between the two teams. In the first half alone, the Mariners were 10-for-14 from three-point range

– overall, they shot a remarkable 14-of-24 from beyond the arc.

Mariners junior guard Demari Millstead led all scorers with 35 points, which included an alley-oop from 20-feet to power forward Oscar Frayer, who finished the play with a one-handed dunk befit of an NBA superstar.

"They're best I've seen in NCS for a few years," said coach Drew McDonald, who saw the game as learning experience and good preparation for the upcoming CIF state tournament. "As painful as it was tonight, it's a huge experience for my guys."

The Mats relied on senior stal-

warts and four-year starters Eddy Ionescu and Ryan Anderson, who both finished with 21 points. Anderson flew around the court like a buzzard, forcing two first-quarter steals, and slamming home a reverse dunk off a turnover.

Despite the loss, the Mats have plenty to build on. With the strong finish, the Mats earned the fifth seed in the Division III tournament, the highest seed awarded to an NCS team in the tournament—the Mariners, in turn, will play for the state title in the Open Division. The Matadors earned a first round bye, and will travel to Atherton to take on No. 4 Sacred Heart on March 12. ... continued on page C3

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