

Published April 18th, 2018

Lamorinda boys lacrosse

By Jon Kingdon



Diego Jenab Photo Gint Federas

After a successful 2017 season, Acalanes boys lacrosse team continues to be a force with a 9-3 record and 5-0 in league play so far. Head coach Brent Ringwood has found much to appreciate about this team: "They are resilient and the kids have a strength that I did not know that they had. They have all been willing to put themselves in uncomfortable positions."

With injuries to key players, midfielder Matt Mariani (knee) and leading scorer Colin Jeffries (ankle), Ringwood has been forced to use players at different positions than originally assigned: "We're working through the injuries and asking players to fill different roles. Our younger players have been asked to do things sooner than we anticipated."

The Don's captains, Jake Landry, Fynn Chorak and Jeffries have taken on the role of leadership which has been crucial as the team has been forced to call upon the younger players to step up.

Joey Gladden and Nick Schirmer have played better than anticipated. With an inexperienced defense, the key to holding it all together is goalie Parker Henderson. Says Ringwood: "Parker is a great communicator. He talks to the defense and tells them where they should be. He makes some impossible saves. You really have to beat him. If you are nonchalant, Parker will make the stop."

Besides Landry and Chorak, Reed Watson, Avery Howell and Jack Wickline have been very effective as a group on offense averaging 12 goals a game.

Ringwood is still looking for improvement down the stretch: "We have had to change our offense around due to the injuries and are still looking to find our rhythm offensively. We need to clear the ball better (getting the ball into the offensive side of the field) and improve our riding (forcing the other team to turn the ball over after a missed shot)."

This along with the potential return of Mariani and Jeffries from their injuries should go a long way to help the team enter the playoffs with great momentum.

After a three-year run with a 45-15 record, capped off by winning the NCS championship last season, Campolindo graduated 12 seniors that were very much responsible for the success of those teams. With only one win (and a couple of one goal losses) so far this season, first year head coach Colin Knightly knew this year was going to be a challenge: "We have a whole new cast of characters playing roles that they are just learning but we are gaining experience. It is a rebuilding and regrouping year for us. We are building a long-term sustainable program. It's exciting to have so many young guys getting experience on the varsity level that will help in the future."

With only seven seniors on the team and asking nine sophomores and freshmen to step up, the team is still searching for its identity. Inexperienced teams are susceptible to committing turnovers and the Cougars have been particularly vulnerable in this area. Taking on the leadership role is senior Foster Jones on the field and vocally.

Without a JV team this year, the underclassmen have taken advantage of the opportunity to play more than anticipated. Says Knightly: "We have two freshmen playing key roles. Sam Rack has been a consistent scorer and Cam Reath has shown great potential on defense."

With an injury to incumbent goalie, Brian Gross, junior Matt Gagan has been converted into a goalie. Says Knightly appreciatively: "Matt is growing as a goalie. He is really stepping up."

Knightly is optimistic about the team's potential in the near future: "As soon as we cut down our mistakes and play more confidently with the ball in our stick, teams will be afraid to play us and we should soon have some big wins. With our underclassmen getting such great experience, the future is bright for our team."

Miramonte's head coach Byron McGovern has a situation opposite to Campolindo, which graduated a great number of seniors last season. The Matadors, much improved from an 8-11 season in 2017, have a 7-2 record so far this year. Explains McGovern: "Last season we had three seniors and 12 juniors. We have been able to build off what we did last year. Plus, this year we have a JV team as well."

McGovern appreciates the consistency Miramonte has shown this year with only one lopsided loss. Ironically McGovern took great satisfaction in a loss to Davis: "After being down 5-0, we fought back to only lose 9-7 to a good team on the road. This team really sticks together. The players pick each other up. They are a great group of friends off the field and they play like that on the field. It's an extremely resilient group. They keep each other positive. I'm just trying to set up the system to work with what we already have."

With the bulk of the team's seniors on offense and a very young defense, Miramonte has come to rely heavily on senior goalie Diego Jenab who has committed to Colorado State next year. Jenab has been making as many as 16 saves a game, many in close victories. Says McGovern: "Diego has to be our MVP. He has carried us through some rough patches making the saves a goalie wouldn't normally make. He is athletic and explosive to the ball. He covers the inside shots and makes the secondary saves after the initial stops. He commands our defense."

The team starts two sophomores on defense, Jamie Richardson and Carson Essabhoy, both of whom have not been intimidated being starters. Says McGovern: "The way they play, you wouldn't know they were sophomores." Junior Jake Ortiz has filled many roles for Miramonte according to McGovern: "Jake is a top athlete and very aggressive. He is willing to play wherever he is needed."

Leading the team on offense has been senior Sawyer Essabhoy (Carson's older brother) and junior Charlie Hawkins. McGovern speaks highly of their skills: "Sawyer is the ultimate team player. He makes decisions to make the right pass and he leads the team in possessions. He is a great leader. Charlie has been a real force on offense."

McGovern is still looking for improvement by the team's offense as the season winds down: "We are looking to improve our face-off percentage and to not waste any possessions. We need to make it a team effort rather than just relying on our goalie making so many saves."



Jake Landry



Fynn Chorak

Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA