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Miramonte and Acalanes girls defeated in Division II semifinals

By Jon Kingdon



Photo Gint Federas

The Acalanes and Miramonte girls lacrosse teams proved to be near carbon copies of each other. Acalanes concluded their season with a 16-8 record. Miramonte finished their season with a 17-8 record. Miramonte defeated Acalanes 15-14 in their last regular season game to go undefeated in league play and Acalanes returned the favor by defeating Miramonte in the championship game to win the Diablo Athletic League tournament.

Acalanes entered the NCS Division II tournament seeded third and Miramonte was seeded fourth. Each school won two games prior to their semifinal games. Miramonte defeated Urban (S.F.) 20-2 and Marin Academy 12-7 and Acalanes defeated Livermore 16-1 and Tamalpais (Mill Valley) 10-7. The similarities continued as each school lost to the respective No. 1 and No. 2 seeds in their semifinal games.

Miramonte had lost to the No.1 seeded Piedmont earlier in the season by a score of 13-8 and traveled to Piedmont for the rematch. Piedmont jumped out to an 8-2 lead after 14 minutes in the first half. A key series occurred with only 15 seconds to go in the half and Miramonte trailing 9-5. The Matadors missed a close-in shot and Piedmont passed the ball down the field and scored with three seconds left to make the score 10-5 at the half.

In the second half, Piedmont extended their lead to 14-7 after nine minutes. Miramonte battled back to close the score to 16-12 but Piedmont went on to score three of the next four goals, winning by a score of 19-13.

Miramonte head coach Jackie Pelletier saw little difference between the teams: "We were even on draws and possessions. The difference was just putting the ball in the back of the net. We did not convert on our opportunities. We hit the post four times and that made a huge difference for us."

Senior co-captain Taylor Johnson, who will be attending Cal Poly SLO next year, spoke highly of her time with the team: "I honestly could not have asked for a better four years playing lacrosse. I know we ended on a loss but I really have no regrets. I lived in the moment and we had the best team chemistry we ever could have asked for. I'll definitely miss being part of the team. There's nothing like being on your high school sports team. The chemistry, the bond and all that you go through together is something I won't forget."

Despite the loss, Pelletier saw it as a successful season: "We had the biggest turnover we ever had coming off last season and these kids worked so hard and to be this close tonight, it's huge for them. I'm most proud of the fact that there isn't any team in this division that is better than us. Tonight, it just came down to who had a better day."

Acalanes had to make the trip to Novato to play the second-seeded San Marin High School. It was a close first half until San Marin scored three late goals to end the period up 6-3.

Acalanes head coach Mary Doyle pulled the team together at halftime. "We did not come out as strong as we wanted to and weren't quite clicking. At halftime, I told the team that three goals is not a lot to make up. We had a good mindset at halftime and we executed well in the second half."

However, with the game tied at 9-9, San Marin scored the deciding goal with 1:30 left to close out the scoring and clinching the victory 10-9, the fourth time this season that Acalanes lost a game by one goal.

Doyle accepted the loss, but wasn't happy about it: "It was a heartbreaker, but we gave a great effort. We hit the pipe twice in crucial moments but that is part of the game. I'm so proud of the girls. They fought and played hard and won the second half."

Doyle singled out senior Claire Gallagher and junior Lauren Westergren: "Claire was our MVP. She was so consistent and always gave 100 percent. She was a great leader and you always noticed her on the field. Lauren always showed great hustle providing the spark for us and at times was unstoppable."

Doyle took a lot of positives from her first season as the Dons' head coach: "We played really well and had some great breakout games. Even our losses were good learning experiences and the girls grew a lot and got better every game. It was inspiring to see how committed they all were. Everyone bought into our system and we all had the same goals. That meant more to me than winning the championship, knowing that academics came first and how important it was to be a good teammate and to do things the right way. That's what I am most proud of about the team."



Acalanes senior night Photo Gint Federas

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