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## Lamorinda boys' water polo back in the swim of things

By Jon Kingdon



Two of the three Campolindo co-captains, West Temkin and Luca Rago. (Not pictured, Brody Crouch) Photo provided

offense with Gotterup, who has shown the most improvement from last season leading the way. "Christian is turning out to be a real dynamic player for us and is someone that we can really go to and lean on," Haley said. "He's really fast and explosive in the water and has a great shot. He understands the game and is doing well in every facet. He's really turned into a leader of the team, and you can see it in the way that everyone is playing and revolving around him."

Senior Eli Berkowitz is the team's biggest defender and Bishop will move over to defense when the situation calls for it. "Austin can do a little bit of everything," Haley said. He will go from being an attacker to defense where he has come up with some big stops and will guard whomever we call upon him to guard."

Junior Harrison Labrosse is a first-time starter though he did get some time in the goal last year. "Harrison has been really big in the net and has bailed us out of some situations where we've had defensive lapses," Haley said. "He has really improved from last year in his ability to read what the offense is about to do and in getting there a step ahead of them and coming up with some big blocks."

Haley sees the light at the end of the tunnel for the team: "We're still developing and finding our personality. At the end of the day, I believe we're going to be a very resilient team with ups and downs. However our mindset develops will project us up to the top or sink us a bit. The biggest thing for us right now is to stay positive and find that chemistry within the team and making sure that everyone is on the same page."

Though Acalanes had no preseason tournaments, they will be playing in the Jesuit Classic in Sacramento in October.

### Campolindo

Hanley, in his second year as the team's coach, welcomes the return of Miles Price as the Cougars' co-head coach and Anton Sapozhnikov as an assistant coach. "It makes things easier for me with Miles and Anton back," Hanley said. "They know how to win and they're valuable resources for me to draw from so it's good to have them back."

Campolindo recently returned from a trip down to Southern California, an annual foray which allows the coaches to evaluate where the team is early in the season. "The competition is always really good down there," Hanley said. "It's good to play the teams from Los Angeles because they play together all year round

Despite the short turnaround from last spring's abbreviated season, the Lamorinda boys' water polo coaches and players see it as a small price to pay to get to a sense of normalcy. "The off-season was very short and very different," Miramonte head coach James Lathrop said. "In some ways there is some good in getting back into the season so quickly but there are challenges as well. It's been different trying to figure things out. Still, it's been exciting to get going again."

Yurii Hanley, Campolindo's head coach, is taking a broader perspective on the season: "We're not worried about the shorter preseason. It's nice to have a full season again and we're looking at everything long-term. We're going through it all step-by-step so we can fix things on a daily basis, knowing we have until November to figure it all out."

### Acalanes

Lincoln Haley, in his second year as the head coach at Acalanes, is very optimistic about the team's prospects, having won three of their first five games. "We excited about our team," Haley said. "We have a solid group of juniors and seniors leading the underclassmen."

The Don's offense is led by seniors Kyle Rosenblatt and Warren Cooper and juniors Andrew Sappal, Austin Bishop and Christian Gotterup. This is a very balanced

so it's a good benchmark to see where we need to get to, and they always give us good competition."

The Cougars were 3-3 on the trip and used it as an opportunity to come together as a team, Hanley said: "We learned that we're a counter team, focusing on hard press, communication and team-work. We have 95% of the game down and now we're working on the final 5% which will take us to the next level."

Campolindo has a veteran offense led by senior co-captains Luca Rago and Brody Crouch. Tommy Richards, a lefty and Owen Younger, both seniors, are also starters. Younger utilizes his speed and his ability to push the counter attacks. Starting center Ben Larson is out for the season and has been replaced by Reid Larsen who has stepped up and filled in very capably. Sophomore Will Barash is a player that has gotten some playing time. "Will has a nice shot and is someone to look out for," Hanley said. "He is an attacker and we're looking forward to see how he grows as a player."

It's more a team effort than individual standouts on the Cougars' offense. "We're more team units than individual players," Hanley said. "We don't relay on a single person for our entire offense."

Defense is also a group effort for the Cougars. "We pride ourselves on team defense," Hanley said. "Everyone takes pride in what they're doing and that is our identity." Junior Grant Roesch is the utility man on the team that does everything, playing center defender and attacker. Younger has been a standout on defense as the team's top defender but again, according to Hanley, "We really try and emphasize that defense is really a team game, so we try and stop players as a team and not with one player."

However, there is only one man in the goal, senior co-captain West Temkin, who will be attending Harvard next year. "West has been great to coach," Hanley said. "He the anchor of our defense and is a great team leader who teammates look up to."

Still, Hanley is looking for the team to take the next step: "We're really focusing on communicating and trusting each other. If we can finish better and increase our overall intensity, we'll be in a good spot the rest of the season."

#### Miramonte

It's been a great beginning for Miramonte winning their first four games and ranking eighth in MaxPreps National Boy's Water Polo rankings. Despite losing 11 seniors to graduation, the team still has 17 seniors and juniors and three sophomores and two freshmen on the roster.

"We have a young team in that we relied on a lot of seniors last year," Lathrop said. "This year we're still figuring each other out and I'm working on how to bring the best out of them. They're a talented group and we're learning how to support each other and figuring out which roles they will fill during the season. We're only a few games in but they're competing like heck in practice."

Donovan Davidson and Charlie Engs are two returning starters that have been solid both offensively and defensively, but the team is still a work in progress. "With only four games, it's early but we never try to rely on one play more than another," Lathrop said. "So far it's been a collective effort and that's how we like it. It's about everyone making the right plays and decisions, supporting each other, making good passes, and finding the right shots. We're trying to fill a lot of spots. We have a lot of young talent and we're trying to put them in the right spots to succeed."

Senior Owen Van Stralen has returned as the starting goalie and has been very strong in terms of leadership and running the defense. Senior Captain Will Stryker has been relied on to play the leading role on defense.

As dominant as the Matadors have been, Lathrop is looking for the team to continue to improve: "We're a young group and we just want to keep getting better. Hopefully we'll be in a good spot at the end of the year."

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