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Acalanes girls basketball lead Lamorinda teams into the playoffs

By Jon Kingdon



Acalanes guard K.K. Lacañale (33) surrounded by Miramonte players Photo Ann Murphy

for a big player to guard her. Sofia transferred in and had to sit out the early part of the season and has ended up being a very solid player for us and has definitely been a part of our success."

A pleasant surprise for the team has been junior forward Addi Ames. "Addi hadn't played since middle school and she has really improved and come along," Gartner said.

This is a team that is all business, and to a point unemotional on the floor. "We talk about just focusing on the next play," Gartner said. "The players know they have to finish what they start and then we can celebrate."

With the sixth seed in the Division III NorCal Tournament, Acalanes planned to host Archbishop Riordan on Tuesday Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

Miramonte

Miramonte started off the season losing six of their first nine games and then went on to go 17-5 the rest of the season, going 11-1 in league play.

"I would say it was a successful season," head coach Vince Wirthman said. "We intentionally had a tough preseason schedule. We came together later in the season and won a couple games in the NCS tournament with the No. 3 seed in the Division II playoffs so I would say it was a good year all around."

Miramonte suffered a tough loss to Northgate in the third round of the playoffs, with two starters missing the game and shooting 3 for 30 on three's and the game came down to a last second shot to win it by Northgate.

Karena Eberts had an outstanding season averaging 19.0 points/game and also broke Miramonte's career rebounding record and there was a lot of balanced scoring after Eberts.

The leading scorers after Eberts were seniors Willa Mapaye (6.1) and Marianna Lawrence (5.8), juniors Julia Quinn Ferguson (6.0) and Robin Parmelee (5.2), and sophomore Maegan Gloria Eichenberger (5.7).

With Acalanes heading to the NorCal tournament and Miramonte and Campolindo all winning playoff games, it's clearly been a successful season for the Lamorinda girls basketball teams.

Acalanes

Despite losing two key players to injuries --first team all-league Sophie Chinn (knee) and Lexi Le (shoulder) -- Acalanes played in the open division in the NCS tournament as the No. 5 seed, splitting two games and finished with a 26-5 record and automatically qualified for the NorCal tournament.

"After losing someone like Sophie who played such a big role on our team, everybody's had to do a little bit more," head coach Margaret Gartner said. "Our girls are in great shape, and they dig deep and just keep battling every game and that's all that you can ask."

The strength of the team has been their ability to call upon any number of players to score, led by last year's division co-MVP Karyss (K.K.) Lacañale, Dulci Vail, Ariana Hallstrom, Natalie Frechman, and Sofia Fernandez.

"Ariana has been very solid and a huge part of our success," Gartner said. "We're happy to have her playing at full strength and we depend on her. Dulci has constantly improved with her skills and confidence. She's a tough matchup because she moves so well so it's hard

"We're going to miss Karena and Willa and others, but we've got a good nucleus coming back so I think we'll be competitive next year for sure," Wirthman said.

With the fifth seed in the NorCal Tournament, Miramonte planned to travel 123 miles on Tuesday for a 5 p.m. game against the fourth seeded Colfax High School.

Campolindo

Campolindo, the prior two seasons had a combined record of 15-35 and 2-22 in league play and finished this season with a 15-15 record, 5-7 in league play and a home playoff win 51-37 over Archie Williams.

"I think the season was a resounding success," head coach Doug Cardoni said. "I care more about getting the girls to play the way I wanted them to play, with freedom, but they really cared about our record, and they showed it on the court in how hard and well they competed."

Leading the team this season were the junior captains Ali McCauley and Raegan Shum. "Ali was outstanding this season and I expect her to be even far better next year because we have certain things that we're really going to work on with her," Cardoni said. "Raegan embraced our new philosophy early on and just took off with it. She was a three-point shooter but also became a good driver and was our best defender on and off the ball all year."

The Cougars are looking forward to having 6'2" sophomore Sofia Iakovleva for the whole season next year after only being eligible to play two games on varsity at the end of this year.

Cardoni will be extending what he has brought to the team next year: "I want the players to look for mismatches whether it's size, speed or skills and building from the base up by recognizing situations and that's where basketball gets to be a lot more fun from a thinking perspective."

Graduating only three seniors, Cardoni is brimming with optimism: "Our freshman and sophomore classes were great, and I'm really excited about next season."



Miramonte's Karena Eberts being guarded by Acalane's Dulce Vail Photo Ann Murphy

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