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## Local Rivalry's New Family Focus

By Robin Schoettler Fox



New Lady Mat's varsity basketball coach James Kizziee and his daughter Taylor, a freshman on the Campo varsity squad, are giving this long-time local basketball rivalry a new twist Photo Robin Schoettler Fox

The Miramonte vs. Campolindo rivalry just got a little more interesting.

On January 6th, when Lady Mats face Cougars in the league opener, it's going to be Dad versus daughter. New Matador head girls' varsity coach James Kizziee, a familiar Campolindo basketball face since 2004 but overlooked twice for the Cougar head coach position, turns to the green just as his daughter Taylor, a Campo freshman, joins Campo's varsity roster.

One problem: Orinda resident Kizziee, who loves to coach Taylor, will barely get to see his daughter play this season. Why not just put Taylor on the Matador roster? Nice dream. Wrong dreamer.

"That would make it about me, if she came to Miramonte," says Kizziee.

Taylor considered it, taking in a preseason Matador open gym. But being a Cougar has been her dream since 4th grade. "I'd wear my Campo sweatshirt to O.I. S. all the time, with everyone else wearing their Miramonte sweatshirts," says Taylor.

What's going to happen when the two teams hit the court? Parents coaching their own kids, we've seen. There's no playbook here, unless someone has John Elway's number.

Expect, though, a lot of "focus." The entire Matador squad and probably some of Kizziee's former Cougar players, certainly Taylor, will use the pre-game visualization technique Kizziee teaches.

Kizziee says the Matadors will be in the locker room, everyone quiet while he

calls out names and detailed plays, imagined scenarios that might begin, "Chelsea you're pushing the ball up the court, everybody's looking for Stephanie, Stephanie goes to set a screen..."

Taylor used to get a shout-out. Now, she calls the plays for herself, sometimes with a teammate. "I sit and think about how the game will unfold and the different types of scenarios that could happen," she explains. She's learned - when she doesn't "focus" pre-game, more mistakes happen on the court.

At home they work on basketball fundamentals, Dad with daughter. But Kizziee says he's never coached Taylor differently from his other players. His cites a repeated court compliment, received first from a referee, as proof: "If it wasn't for Taylor's skin color I would never have known she was your daughter."

Expect the same when the Matadors face the Cougars, says Kizziee. Taylor will play her best and the Matadors won't let up:

"If she's having a great game, she'll get double teams. I'll put my best defenders on it. If she earns anything, she earns it. It will never be because I made it easy for her."

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