

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Lady Gaels Take Second in Thanksgiving Tournament

By Kevin D. Shalatt



Gaels' Louella Tomlinson fights to put up a shot through a Hoosier swarm Photo Sheryl Cardiff

Nobody can accuse the Saint Mary's Women's basketball team of scheduling weak opponents. So far the lady Gaels have played Old Dominion, Texas, Nevada, and the University of Indiana. During the Thanksgiving holiday break Saint Mary's hosted the Concord Hilton Thanksgiving Classic in Moraga.

The Gaels won their opening game against La Salle 61-55 on a strong performance from their center, Louella Tomlinson.

On Saturday, November 29, the Gaels played the University of Indiana Hoosiers for the Classic championship. Saint Mary's was competitive for much of the first

half, but the Gaels found themselves down by 15 points at halftime. They were able to trim the lead to 13 in the second half, but they were unable to come back. Despite another strong effort from Louella Tomlinson, Saint Mary's eventually fell to the Hoosiers, 80-63.

The Hoosiers gave the Gaels every opportunity to take the lead early in this game, as Indiana's play was sloppy at the onset. Indiana shot just 39 percent in the first half, connecting on only one three-pointer in eight attempts. The Gaels weren't able to take advantage offensively, shooting just 27 percent in the first half. It didn't help that the Gaels were without their all-time leading 3-

point scorer, Jontelle Smith, who remained sidelined with a knee injury.

The Hoosiers won 18 games in the Big Ten last year. Part of the reason for their current success can be attributed to their forward, Amber Jackson. The senior from Yokosuka, Japan, was able to dominate the Gaels in the paint, as she scored 15 of her 25 points in the first half.

The Gaels usually look to run on their opponents, but it was Indiana who controlled the pace of this game. The Hoosiers were able to score on a number of fast break opportunities.

Saint Mary's forward Maija Lahde led the Gaels in the first half. She managed six rebounds and two assists in the period.

The score got away from the Gaels in the second half, but there were plenty of bright spots for Saint Mary's as well. Freshman guard Katie Batlin showed flashes of the ball handling that made her such a valuable recruit coming out of Miramonte High.

"She is a joy to coach," said Head Coach Paul Thomas. "I couldn't be prouder to coach someone like Katie."

Sophomore guard Erika Ruiz made the most of her 18 minutes on the court. Ruiz went 3-4 from the field and finished with 10 points. Freshman Ashlee Smith played like a veteran, as she finished up with nine rebounds and seven points in 12 minutes. Tomlinson continues to put up impressive numbers. She was able to record 12 rebounds, 11 points, and 8 blocks, on her way in garnering all tournament honors. She was just two blocks shy of recording a triple double.

The Gaels look to build upon their runner-up finish at the Thanksgiving Classic, as they continue to play top-notch teams in preparation for league play.

Gaels Fall to New Mexico State in NCAA Tourney

By Mikaela Cowles

The Saint Mary's Women's volleyball team lost in the first round of the NCAA Division I conference tournament to New Mexico State. In a four set match the Gaels won the first 25-22, but gave up the last three, 16-25, 21-25 and 15-25.

Megan York earned the first point of the match for either team with a kill, but New Mexico responded, to tie the set. Though the Gaels took a three-point lead, they allowed the Aggies back in the game with several unforced errors. As New Mexico tied the score and then gained the advantage the two teams battled back and forth for the lead. The set continued and Saint Mary's gained confidence, forcing 10 New Mexico errors. The Gaels finished the first set with three blocks and 13 digs to the Aggies' zero blocks and 11 digs.

The second set was a brand new look at both teams as the Aggies came out strong and gained the early lead, 8-3. New Mexico began hitting their zones, targeting 8 with great accuracy, completing 14 kills in 26 swings with only one error. The Aggies' high hitting percentage combined with multiple unforced errors by the Gaels let the set end quickly.

New Mexico's senior middle hitter Amber Simpson later said, "The other team let up during the third game and we really took advantage of it."

The proof? The Aggies opened the third set with an 8-1 lead. York ended New Mexico's run with a kill. The Gaels fought back in the third going on a 9-4 run, but lost their momentum at the end as New Mexico tied the score and went on a 6-2 run to win the set.

The Gaels opened the fourth set 8-7, a lead they never saw again. New Mexico took the fourth set easily.

Saint Mary's finished the season 20-8.

Head coach Rob Browning said: "We are disappointed, of course. We always expect to win. Our girls played hard, but they are a young team. They might not always do everything right in terms of execution but our girls always play hard every night."

Saint Mary's graduates five seniors. They will return nine players, however, not the least of which are star outside hitter Megan York and libero Alita Fisher.

The Gaels are disappointed with the NCAA tournament results, but they show the makings of a great and experienced team for next year.

Triple Threat Tackles East Coast Lacrosse

Submitted by Phyllis Frazer



Pictured in front row: Jessie Esteban, Jillian Bush, Zaynib Hamze, Casey Bowles, Rachel Ozer, Caroline Federighi; Middle row: Devon Frazer, Erin McGillivray, Katie Mitchell, Paige Southmayd, Melissa Trisko, Jenna Alberts; Last row: Maddie Saxton, Morgan Lear, Aimee Dewan, Alex Seclow, Katherine Herzog. Not pictured: Coach Dearborn David and Coach Noemi Hites Photo Jim Mittelberger

History was made in mid-November when the varsity team of Triple Threat Lacrosse proved to the national lacrosse community that California lacrosse was a force to be reckoned with. Seventeen girls from high schools throughout the East Bay came together as one to face the best the East Coast had to offer in the Mid-Atlantic Lacrosse Tournament in Owings Mills, MD. Four of the Triple Threat players are from

Lamorinda: Devon Frazer and Katie Mitchell from Acalanes, Rachel Ozer from Campolindo, and Alex Seclow from Miramonte. The other girls on the team go to various East Bay high schools, including Monte Vista, Foothill, San Ramon Valley, Dublin and Amador Valley.

Triple Threat came into the tournament as the underdog. They faced down the competition and went undefeated as they entered the

Championship game. Though Triple Threat led throughout most of the game, an unfortunate call in the last 30 seconds resulted in a goal for the team from Philadelphia, allowing them to pull ahead of Triple Threat. The final score was 5-4.

Though Triple Threat may have lost, they surpassed anyone's expectations of what a California team could accomplish against the lacrosse dynasty of the East Coast.

Local Rowers Begin Road to Junior National Team

By Annie Mudge



High Performance campers pictured from left to right: Dana Walsh (Miramonte); Claire Grover (Miramonte); Nikki Dahlberg-Seeth (Miramonte); Ali Mittelberger (Head Royce); Barbara Barnes (College Prep); Kelly Bauer (Miramonte) Photo provided

Six rowers from Oakland Strokes, Inc. have been identified as top junior female rowers in the nation. Four are Miramonte students: Danna Walsh, Nikki Dahlberg-Seeth, Claire Grover and Kelly Bauer.

"Six rowers being invited from one junior rowing team is fairly remarkable," said Strokes Women's Varsity Coach, Ian P. Simpson. "Oakland Strokes rowers will make up 21% of the 28 sweep rowers who have been identified and selected from across the United States to attend the 'invitation-only' High Performance Camp."

The High Performance camp, held at the Texas Rowing Club in Austin during the first weekend in December, is an opportunity for coaches from the Junior National Team to coach and observe an elite group of athletes before the formal February try-outs for US Rowing Selection Camp in June. This performance-based camp has become an integral part

of the selection process to identify the athletes who will represent the United States on the 2009 US Junior Selection Team, which will ultimately compete in France at the Junior World Championships in August.

"Rowers invited to High Performance Camp have demonstrated the technical performance, endurance and strength to qualify for a close look for next summer's Selection Camp and the potential for perhaps rowing for the US Junior National Team," said Simpson. "Selection Camp can open the door to a wide range of international training and racing opportunities."

Communicating by text message with the Lamorinda Weekly on Day 2 of camp, Miramonte senior Claire Grover wrote: "The biggest surprise is how relaxed and supportive an environment (the camp) is. I came prepared for crazy intensity, and while it is physically demanding, the coaches are really looking out for you and mainly just

trying to make you a better rower."

Asked about competitive energy among campers, Grover added that, since it wasn't a try-out, things were more low-key. "Everyone seems mainly focused on themselves and just trying to improve instead of focusing intensely on what everyone else is doing."

Oakland Strokes, Inc. is one of the premier junior rowing programs on the West Coast. With both Junior Men's and Junior Women's crews at varied levels, Strokes emphasizes the values of teamwork, leadership, initiative, dedication and fellowship, as well as rowing technique and fitness. Oakland Strokes rowers have also enjoyed successful academic achievement. Among those considering college-rowing prospects, Grover has already picked. She's headed to Stanford after graduation.

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Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136; email: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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Publisher: Andy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, phone 925-330-7916
Associate Publisher: Wendy Wuertth-Scheck; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Editor: Lee Borrowman; lee@lamorindaweekly.com
Advertising: Wendy Wuertth-Scheck; 925-377-0977, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com

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Staff Writers:
 Jennifer Wake; jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com
 Sophie Braccini; sophie@lamorindaweekly.com
 Cathy Tyson; cathy@lamorindaweekly.com
 Andrea A. Firth; andrea@lamorindaweekly.com
 Jean Follmer; jean@lamorindaweekly.com
 Contributing Writers: Linda U. Foley, Conrad Bassett, Susie Iventosch, Mikaela Cowles, Guy Dotan, Alex Crook
Sports Editor: Robin Schoettler Fox
Photos: Tod Fiermer, Doug Kohan, Jordon Fong, Robert Johnson, Sheryl Cardiff

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Sat, Dec 27 Men's Basketball Shamrock Classic	5:00 PM Moraga (McKeon Pavilion)
Sat, Dec 27 Men's Basketball	7:30 PM Pacific

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