



SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Miramonte DFAL Basketball Starts Strong

By Conrad Bassett



Mats' Anthony Pignelli drives past Cougar Kellen Ito on way to Mats' first DFAL win
Photo Jordan Fong

The 2009 Diablo Foothill Athletic League basketball season started out strong at Miramonte High School, where both the Matador boys' and girls' teams edged local rival Campolindo teams before a packed house.

In the early game, the Lady Mats overcame several Campolindo runs and hung on to win 60 to 56 while the Miramonte boys also won by four, 52-48, in a defensive struggle.

The Miramonte teams wore their black away uniforms in honor of their former coach, Darrell Hirashima, who passed away on December 19. He had led the girls' team to several outstanding seasons, including an NCS Division 3 championship last year. The standing room only crowd honored Coach Hirashima with a moment of silence prior to the beginning of the game.

The Lady Cougars came out strong and led the game after the first period by a score of 19-16. The 2nd period was a streaky one as Miramonte pulled to a nine point lead before Campolindo went on a 14-0 run to lead at halftime, 32-28.

The Lady Mats went to work in the 3rd period. Led by Chelsey Christensen's six points, Miramonte took the lead for good, outscoring Campo 17-8. In the final period, the Mats held off several Campo rallies with the Cougars only getting as close as 47-46 with just over six minutes remaining.

Christensen and Stephanie Golden each finished with 12 points to lead Miramonte. Christensen also had 12 rebounds and Golden added eight. Kelly Thomas led Campo with 15 points.

The game was the DFAL head coach debut for Lady Mats' James

one period. They expanded the lead to eight at the half before Campo whittled down the lead.

Led by tenacious defense from seniors Chris Dyer and Miles Macy, Campo cut the lead to 36-31 after three periods, and closed the lead to two a couple of times during the last quarter before clutch free throw shooting from Spenser McDonald and Eric Obeysekere ended the suspense.

Macy was fouled with less than four seconds to go while shooting a three point attempt and hit the first two free throws to cut the lead to 50-48.

Macy then intentionally missed the third free throw but Mats' Obeysekere came up with the rebound, drew a foul and nailed the final two free throws for the 52-48 win.

Obeysekere had 16 points to go with 15 rebounds. He made 12 of 16 free throws. Davis Louie added ten points for Miramonte. Dyer led Campo with 13 points, nine rebounds, and five assists.

Since the opener, both the Miramonte and Campolindo boys' teams have won all their DFAL league games.

The Mats are now 4-0 and atop the DFAL, having beaten Acalanes, Dublin, and Dougherty Valley handily. The Cougars are in 2nd at 2-1, crushing Dougherty Valley and coming out strong against Las Lomas last week. Acalanes is in fifth place with a 1-2 DFAL record, having thus far beaten Alhambra but lost to Miramonte and Las Lomas.

As for the girls' DFAL records, Miramonte is now 3-1, while Campolindo and Acalanes are tied, each with a 2-1 DFAL record reflecting respective losses to Miramonte.

League play resumes on Friday night when Miramonte travels to Las Lomas, Campo plays at Dublin, and Acalanes faces Dougherty Valley in a home game.

Kizziee. It was also the first time Kizziee coached the Mats against rival Campolindo where his daughter, Taylor, is a freshman on the varsity squad. Taylor scored five points for the Cougars in what was her own DFAL debut.

Last season, Coach Kizziee helped coach the Campo boys' team to the NCS Division III championship. Previously, he'd been involved in the Lady Cougar basketball program.

The boys' game was also a tough battle. Miramonte, who had not beaten Campolindo since 2003, was on a mission to end the streak.

The taller Mats went inside early and opened up a 14-7 lead after



Mats' Lauren Kimble shoots over Taylor Kizziee in the DFAL league opener
Photo Jordan Fong

Mats Win in Dons' Gym



Lady Mats beat Acalanes, 49-43, on Friday, January 9. Here, Miramonte's Christine Miller, a junior 5'8" guard, goes for a lay-up, 2 of the 11 points she scored that evening.

The boys' game that followed was back and forth, and tied, 54-54, at the start of the fourth quarter. The Mats stepped it up, knocking in 8 free throws in the final two minutes of play to secure the win, 70-61, and record their second DFAL win.

Kristine Miller (23) of Miramonte going up for a layup against Acalanes Friday night
Photo Jordan Fong

Rival Fans Show New Spirit Style



Photos Jordan Fong



At Miramonte's DFAL league opener on Friday, January 6, the Mats packed the student section in their signature green, but with a new twist -- festive hats and pep rally pompons some fans wore as wigs.

Meanwhile, Campo football players arrived for the game in Miles "Got Milk?" Macy t-shirts, spoofing Cougar starting point guard Macy, a milk-drinking senior who played wide receiver for Campo's football team. By halftime, though, most of the "Got Milk?" shirts were off, replaced with the time-honored Cougar student fan fashion -- a favorite basketball jersey.

Three days later, on January 9, Acalanes hosted the Mats for the Don's first home DFAL game, but conflicting athletic events, including the Mats' football banquet, meant most Miramonte student fans were M.I.A. and missed seeing their Lafayette rival's first-ever "white out" bleacher section as well as the debut of the Don's drum line.

"The '6th Man' never dies," said Acalanes senior Christian Talavera, after the game, referring to the t-shirts traditionally worn by Acalanes fans. But, he explained, Acalanes' student leadership wanted to pump up the school spirit this year by trying something new for the first Lamorinda DFAL match-up.

The drum line? That, says Acalanes senior Kat Lau, a drum line member who is also in Acalanes leadership, is hopefully for keeps.

Acalanes Hosts 10th Annual Girls' Basketball Shootout on Jan 24

Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte are just three of the top East Bay girls' basketball teams that will play in the 10th annual Acalanes Shootout on Saturday, Jan. 24. There will be seven games, with the first at 10:30 a.m. and the last starting at 8 p.m., in a showcase for some of the best teams and players in the area, including Cal signee DeNesha Stallworth who plays for Pinole Valley.

Acalanes, coached by Corrie Mizusawa (who played in the Shootout when she was with the Dons), will play at 8 p.m. against Moreau Catholic of Hayward; Campolindo will open the event at 10:30 a.m. against University of San Francisco High; and Miramonte will take on Amador Valley at 3:30 p.m.

Says Campolindo's coach, Clay Kallam: "The highlight game

will be at 5 p.m. when Stallworth, a 6-3 post who's averaging close to 30 points a game, will lead Pinole Valley against St. Mary's of Berkeley."

The other games are Piedmont vs. Berkeley at noon, Dublin vs. El Camino of Sacramento at 1:30 and Deer Valley of Antioch vs. St. Patrick St. Vincent of Vallejo at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is \$8 for adults and \$5 for kids.

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