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Lady Mats Keep Dons Scoreless

By Joey Epperson



Mats' deBack controls ball by Acalanes' Blee (left) and Whittom during Mats win, 4-0 Photo Bob Johnson

On January 28, the Acalanes Lady Dons (10-3-3) traveled to Miramonte to face last season's NCS champion Lady Matadors (8-0) in a battle of two cross-town DFAL soccer powerhouses. The Dons had not suffered a loss in ten attempts, their last loss dating all the way back to December 17, against Alhambra. But the Mats offense was intense. Though Dons' goalkeeper Angela Lescala-Gruenewald compiled 7 saves, the Mats' prevailed, 4-0.

The Matadors came out firing with an early goal by Katherine Sander, assisted by Marissa Corsetti. The following ten minutes saw three Matador breakaways fended off by the spectacular saves by Lescala-Gruenewald.

With 19 minutes remaining in the half, the Mats continued their attack by way of a beautiful left-footed goal from Mekenna deBack to make the score 2-nil Miramonte.

It seemed as if the Dons were going to get on the board with just under ten minutes remaining in the half after a cross from Michelle Caine to Celina Velasco. However, with the Matador defense closing in on her, Velasco missed, just high off the crossbar.

The start of the second half saw beautiful ball handling by the Matadors, led by deBack and Sander. Off a pass from Sander, the speedy deBack turned the corner and took off down field, which left only one defender to beat. Cutting back to the middle, deBack put the ball past the keeper into the bottom left corner of the goal, giving her a second goal on the night and making the score 3-0 Mats.

Looking to split the Miramonte defense on a strong counter with 28 minutes left, Velasco went down with a low back injury and had to be taken out of the game. Down this key player, the Dons took another shot on goal in the 15th minute, but Manning's save kept the Dons scoreless.

It was all Miramonte after that, as Sander showed more fine dribbling and then scored to give the Matadors their 4th goal of the night.

Focusing on the team's chemistry, Mats captain, senior Elaine Tanski, explained how they've achieved a 31-1-2 two-season record: "We returned a team full of seniors so we have a lot of experience, and we have also been playing together for a long, long time, which gives us an edge when it comes down to the wire."

This time things certainly clicked right for the Matadors, who made 16 attempts on goal. If not for Lescala-Gruenewald's intense protection of the Dons' goal, game results would have been more lopsided.

Both teams continued DFAL play Friday. An Acalanes home game against Alhambra ended in a tie, 1-1. Meanwhile, the Mats trounced Dublin, 8-1.

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