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Lamorinda Middle School Girls Win League Tournaments

By Sophie Braccini and Gint Federas



8th grade tournament champions Stanley Wildcats (pictured left to right): Front Row (L-R): Marie Paladino, Lauren Fruci, Liz Kroetch, Jamie Jacobs; Back row: Assistant Coach Sarah Day, Molly Pines, Grace Francis, Kathryn Hill, Sam Anderson, Coach Joe McElroy, Katie Greer, Nicole Shimotake, Molly Martin, Meghan Hill Photo Naomi Jacobs

Lamorinda middle school girls' basketball teams won both the 7th and 8th grade league tournaments this year. Each advanced to their respective January 22 championship games by competing against teams from schools that span Contra Costa, Alameda, and Solano Counties, though not every middle school within those borders is in the league. Orinda Intermediate, for example, isn't on the list.

In the final games, Joaquin Moraga's 7th grade team beat Stanley, 43-39, while Stanley's 8th grade team defeated Albany, 36-17.

The Lady Marauders (8-4, regular season) overcame a tough Stanley Wildcat squad (12-1, regular season) in the 7th grade league championship game, held this year at Foothill Middle School in Walnut Creek. This hard-fought battle was tied 23-23 at the half. Dana Wong led Moraga with 27 points, including a crucial 3-pointer that pushed JM ahead of Stanley by two points. Near the end of the game, another three-point attempt gave her 3 shots at the line, prompting the Stanley coach to call for time-out. After play resumed, JM kept the lead until the final buzzer.

"In all the years I have coached, I have never seen such unselfish players," said Terry Costello, the JM coach. "They played to make the team win. They passed. They strategized. Only the result counted, not who was the one scoring."

At the awards ceremony, Costello singled out Megan Adachi with a special

trophy, saying that Adachi was the "heart" of the team.

At the 8th grade tournament, held this year at Stanley Middle School, the Wildcats enjoyed home court advantage as they triumphed over the Albany Cobras, 36-17, in the 8th grade girls' championship game, having advanced to the finals by beating both Piedmont and Joaquin Moraga.

"We had a powerful defense and pressed efficiently," explained Coach Joe McElroy, about the championship game. "Albany, which is a great team, didn't get many opportunities to shoot."

Lamorinda high school girls' basketball fans take note - 10 of the 12 girls on the Stanley 8th grade championship team are headed to Acalanes.

"I'm sure that most will continue playing there with the same spirit," said McElroy.



7th Grade Tournament Champions JM Marauders (pictured left to right): Front Row: Dana Wong, Marissa Monopoli; Back row: Jiwon Chung, Megan Adachi, Samantha Garcia, Jenny Leserman, Meredith Stone, Andrea Lucacher, Katie Coates; Rear: Coach Costello; Missing from picture: Antonia Harold Photo Gint Federas

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