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Lamorinda High School Baseball Season Preview

By Justine Sgalio



The Campolindo Cougars' forecast looks sunny this season, after losing just one position player to graduation. But the loss of three pitchers could prove to be a challenge for this team.

The Cougars were a young team last year, but successful, finishing the 2009 season 20-5. This season, the Campolindo roster is diverse, made up of three freshman, three sophomores, four juniors and six seniors.

Of those, the Cougars are returning six All-League players: first baseman Chris Killeen, second baseman Michael Kathan, right fielder Tommy Stephens, pitcher Nick Russ and All-State center fielder Corbin Chase.

But despite six all-leaguers returning to the Campolindo squad, big changes are in store on the mound. The Cougars graduated three pitchers last year, which means more position players will be heading to the hill.

"It [losing three pitchers] will be a hit," head coach Max Luckhurst said.

Miramonte Varsity 2010 team Photo Ohlen Alexander

But Luckhurst is confident that his five pitchers, some of whom are position players, are up for the challenge.

Campolindo heads to Rohnert Park on March 6th to take on Rancho Cotate at 2 p.m.

Across town, the Miramonte Matadors also had a successful 23-3-1 season in 2009 and hope to have similar success in 2010, but the loss of 10 seniors, a few of them key players on the 2009 roster, could prove challenging for the Mats. Some would call it rebuilding, but Miramonte head coach Vince Dell'Aquila prefers the term "reloading."

"Our goal this season is to be competitive," Dell'Aquila said. "Everything else will work itself out."

A key contributor for the Mats this year will be 2009 All-League catcher Kevin Paulsen. In addition, leadership from the team's six seniors, third basemen Michael Mann and Max Pokabla, outfielder Justin Sawrey-Kubicek and pitchers Raul Jacobson, Austin Controulis and Alex Joss, will be essential for the Mats.

"I'm hoping our seniors can step-up this season and lead the team," Dell'Aquila said. "They have big shoes to fill, but I think they're up for the task."

The Mats hit the road to take on Albany on March 11th at 3:30 p.m.

The Acalanes Dons went 12-12 in 2009 and, under the direction of new head coach Justin Santich-Hughes, are striving to improve their record this season with strong, young players.

Offensively, the Dons are led by senior third baseman Trevor Lahonta, who averaged .400 last season, and has improved dramatically on the athletic front since then, according to Santich-Hughes. On the defensive side, Acalanes will be tough to beat up the middle. Sophomore second baseman Connor Hornsby and junior short-stop Evan Heptig are strong defenders in the middle infield, and when coupled with freshman pitcher Andrew Merken on the mound, will be tough to penetrate offensively.

When it comes to pitching, the Dons have lots of arms in experienced seniors John Treat and Adam Hoffman as well as Merken and the team's most consistent pitcher, according to Santich-Hughes, sophomore Spencer Henderson.

"I think last year we struggled a bit offensively," said Santich-Hughes. "But this year our guys seem more focused and a lot stronger offensively."

The Dons beat Tamalpais Valley (Mill Valley, CA) 12-1 in their home opener last weekend, and take on Northgate at home on March 5th at 3:30 p.m.



Acalanes Varsity 2010 team Photo Ohlen Alexander



Campolindo Varsity 2010 team Photo Andy Scheck

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