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Lamorinda Girls' Volleyball Starts Season

By Alex Kozela



Miramonte team last Thursday Photo Doug Kohen

of the season to the end."

Campolindo

Unlike Miramonte, Campolindo is returning ten players, including seven seniors, and is hopeful after finishing in second place in the DFAL last year.

Coach Scott Bishop has worked his players hard all summer - training three times a week - and has scheduled a tough preseason schedule that features teams such as Bishop O' Dowd, Foothill, and Amador.

"You only learn from opponents at or above your skill level so that is what I have tried to do," Bishop said.

Captains Abbie Noland and Kim Condie lead a team that has advanced to the last three North Coast section playoffs and features four players who will enter their fourth season on varsity.

The Cougars, who finished last year with a 23-8 record along with a 10-2 mark in league play, also return Mary Vaccaro who took the last two years of high school volleyball off in favor of playing for the United States U-19 beach volleyball team.

Acalanes

After advancing to the NCS Division III semifinals and earning a 21-12 record in 2008, the Dons finished last season with a disappointing 10-16 (5-5 DFAL) record.

The team has begun the season with a 1-1 record, losing its first game 3-1 against Heritage in Brentwood on September 7, before defeating Liberty in the Deer Valley Tournament 2-1 last Saturday, September 11.

The Dons begin their DFAL campaign September 23 against local rival Campolindo after games against Berean Christian and San Ramon Valley on September 14 and September 16, respectively.

The girls' volleyball teams in Lamorinda are all beginning their respective seasons with different mindsets. Here's a look into how the local teams are preparing for league play.

Miramonte

Losing ten seniors over the last two years, it was a given this season would be a year of rebuilding for the Matadors. Yet that does not mean they will not be driven and competitive.

"What is great about this season's team is they are so incredibly hard working and dedicated to the team," head coach Shannon Ross said. "I get the sense every day that they want to improve and they are going to work extremely hard to do it."

Playing as a cohesive unit will be a must for a team that just lost the two-time defending Diablo Foothill Athletic League (DFAL) MVP Juliana Stivanicevic. The Mats also lost all-league first team honoree Lissa Gilbert. The Matadors, who finished with a 27-3 (12-0 DFAL) record last season but were eliminated in the third round of the North Coast Section playoffs, are returning fellow first team member Sarah Vaccaro, along with standouts Kirsten Rutledge and Jane Siri. While Ross is pleased with the individual talent her players possess, she stresses that in order to get the most out of the new campaign the players need to focus on team effort.

The team has a 0-3 start but will look to grab its first victory at Granada on September 16 before playing at home on September 23 against Dougherty Valley.

"All the girls know that coming together as a team is the most important part of our success this season," Ross said. "I really think we are going to see big improvements from this team from the start



Acalanes team last week Photo Doug Kohlen

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