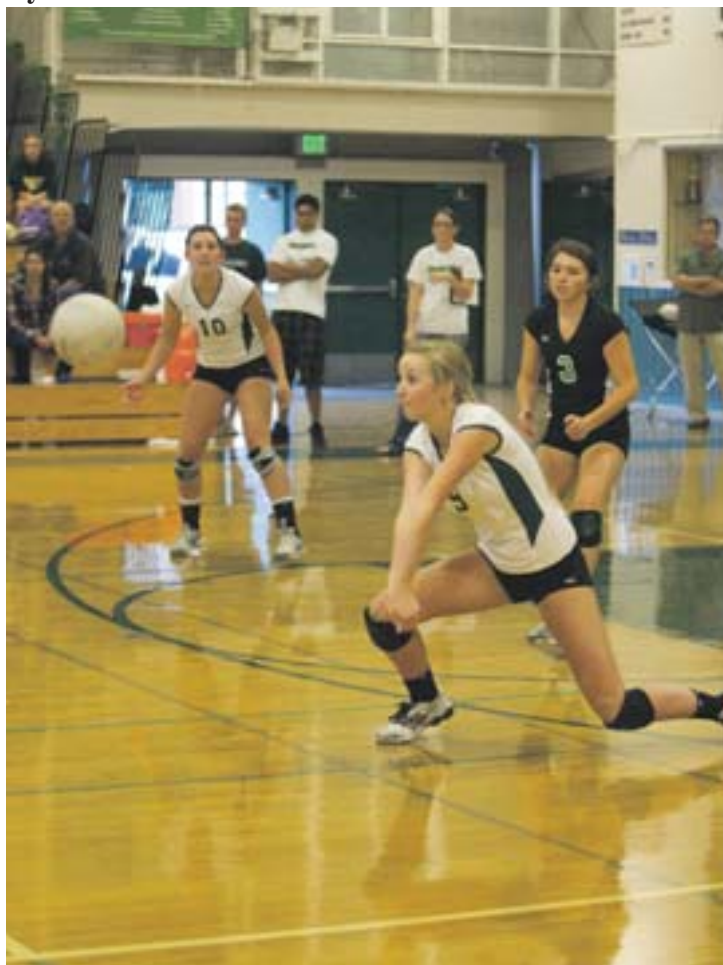


LAMORINDA SPORTS

Lamorinda Girls' Volleyball Starts Season

By Alex Kozela



Miramonte team last Thursday

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



Acalanes team last week

"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

Photo Doug Kohen 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 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.

Boys' Water Polo Makes a Splash in Lamorinda

By Alex Crook



Acalanes and Miramonte in a game last fall

This fall is set to be another great year in the pool as Miramonte, Acalanes, and Campolindo all look to take this year's DFAL crown.

Miramonte is coming off of an outstanding year, after a 12-0 start turned into a 23-4 overall campaign, ending with an NCS championship win over rival Acalanes as the number two seed. Some key returners to the pool for Miramonte include senior utility Joey Fabian, who was chosen as an eighth team All-American and first team all-DFAL, and senior goalie Aleck Ryner.

"This year's Miramonte water polo team is a mix of veteran and young players who are improving rapidly in practice and have their sights set on testing themselves

against the other NCS teams and the top teams from other sections. Our seniors are doing a great job leading the team and encouraging the younger players to improve. We are all looking forward to a great season," says Miramonte head coach James Lathrop. The Mats have won an incredible 12 out of the past 15 NCS titles, and look to do it again this year.

Campolindo comes into 2010 looking pretty strong, returning two key seniors in goalie Peter Price and driver Jeffrey Strausser. The Cougars finished 15-10 last year, and took fourth place in DFAL.

"Our goal is to make it to the NCS finals," says Campolindo head coach Dan Reyes. Last fall, the sixth seeded Cougars defeated Cal High in the first round of the

Photo Doug Kohen NCS playoffs before being eliminated by De La Salle in the quarter-final matchup.

Acalanes comes off of a strong year, finishing out at 19-7 and barely missing out on an NCS title, as the top seeded Dons were edged by second seeded Miramonte in the championship game. The Dons lose last year's league MVP Nick Hoversten, but return a member of last year's first team all-DFAL team, senior Jake Kisner.

"I think our team should be pretty solid this year and we should win NCS division II," says Kisner on his team's high expectations for this year.

All three Lamorinda teams certainly have the potential of being DFAL champions. Stay tuned!

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