

Published November 10th, 2010

Lamorinda Basketball Teams Gear up for Rebuilding Season

By Conrad Bassett



Junior Ross Anderson (44) drives to the basket drawing a foul. Photo Jordan Fong

sophomores.

However, Campo does return players with varsity experience including senior guard Carl King. King started last year and directed the Cougar offense. Other seniors returners include Garrett Franklin, Alan Hickey, and Andrew Ahr.

Both Ahr and junior point guard Griffin Piatt will be out for several weeks with football injuries.

Like the Matadors, Campo has scheduled a challenging preseason schedule that includes all Division 1 opponents and trips to the Montgomery High tournament in Santa Rosa and the Mission Prep Classic in San Luis Obispo.

In Lafayette, coach Darrell Hirashima, Jr. is presented with similar challenges. He lost four of his senior starters including Corey Collins and Tyler Caldwell to graduation as well as a player who would have been his only returning starter, Carlo Valsecchi. Valsecchi was diagnosed with leukemia, and will not be returning.

After fighting through three rounds of chemo therapy over five months, he is finally on the road to recovery. Carlo's presence is deeply missed by the players, coaches and supporters of the Don program. Coach Hirashima said, "His perseverance and positive attitude throughout his ordeal has been a shining light of hope for all of us who know him."

Hirashima mentioned that seniors Michael Jackson, Stephen Collins and Bret Renner all played significant minutes off the bench last year, and they look to be major contributors this season. Up from the junior varsity team are juniors James Griffin, Kevin Huber, and Jonny Coleman

As they prepare for another postseason opportunity, the Dons will go to the Vontoure Classic at De La Salle and the Sonoma County Classic at Piner in the North Bay. Preseason games with always tough San Ramon and El Cerrito will be on the docket as well.

Practice for the consistently strong Lamorinda high school basketball teams began on November 8 and for the first time in several years all three teams will be facing rebuilding challenges.

Over in Orinda, the Miramonte Matadors will try to make up for the loss of several starters who took them all the way to the NCS finals and the Northern California tournament a year ago. The talented three year starters, Davis Louie, Spenser McDonald, and Chris Hatfield, have graduated.

Coach Dave Brown returns for another year at the helm of the Mats and is excited about the upcoming season. The team returns senior Anthony Piganelli who played significant minutes last season as well as junior Ross Anderson who started the last several games of last year. Both are talented athletes and both are playing football so their early season time in basketball will be limited by the success of the Miramonte football team in the post season.

Coach Brown also expects significant contributions from seniors Kaz Tamura and Brian Henson, and junior Jack Pietrykowski who all played on the varsity team a year ago.

Two newcomers who are moving up from last year's JV team are junior Conor Volpe and sophomore Kirin Shastri.

Coach Brown has scheduled a very strong preseason schedule including St. Mary's Berkeley and Salesian as well as a trip to the Sand Dune Classic in San Francisco.

Over in Moraga, Matt Watson returns for his third season as head coach of the Cougars. Campo ran the DFAL table a year ago going 12-0 in league before losing to rival Miramonte in the NCS quarter-finals.

Co-DFAL MVPs, Kellen Ito and Adam Mancebo, have graduated along with several other three-year varsity players. Coach Watson commented that this year's team will be sprinkled with several

The DFAL season starts right after the first of the year and the league looks wide open as Las Lomas returns a strong team and Dougherty Valley and Dublin will also be improved. All three teams are looking forward to keeping the DFAL championship banner in the area as it has been for most of the last decade.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA