

SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS



Matador Football Turns Heads in Playoffs

By Alex Crook



Ross Anderson (9) drops back to throw

Photo Jodan Fong



John Coupin (33) blocks the pass

Photo Jordan Fong

Miramonte, the only Lamorinda high school football team to escape the first round of post-season play, defeated #11 San Marin in the second round on November 27 before falling in the third round to #2 Cardinal Newman on December 3.

Miramonte tied with Alhambra for the regular season league title with a 9-1 record and was given a third seed.

Miramonte blew by Anly in the first round to host San Marin. San Marin shocked Alhambra the week before.

Miramonte started their first drive confident, as back-to-back 14-yard runs put the Mats on the Mustangs' 16 yard line. However, in the next play junior quarterback Ross Anderson fumbled and turned the ball over.

Later, the Matadors drove down the field 86 yards to set up a one-yard touchdown run by senior running back John Coupin, which put the Mats up 7-0 late in the first quarter.

The second-team all-DFAL running back added another touchdown to finish with 16 carries for 125 yards. Behind Coupin, Miramonte rolled to a 23-0 shutout of San Marin to advance.

Coupin, like many of his teammates and coaches, was optimistic about a successful year and expected this playoff run: "I'm not that surprised actually, I thought we were going to be very strong from the very beginning of the season. I thought we had the potential to go undefeated."

The Mats, winners of their

last six, put their nearly perfect 11-1 record on the line a week later against a traditional powerhouse in second-seeded Cardinal Newman.

Cardinal Newman's defense showed up at the beginning and stopped Miramonte on their first possession. Newman gradually made their way down the field, and junior running back Stephen Tomasin punched it in from one yard out to put the visitors up 7-0.

Late in the first quarter, it was Miramonte's turn to drive and Anderson connected with Coupin on a screen pass that accounted for 23 yards, setting up a 15-yard touchdown run for Anderson within a minute to play in the quarter. The first twelve minutes ended in a 7-7 deadlock, but

it was Miramonte who carried the momentum.

Cardinal Newman stormed back with an answer on their ensuing possession, with a touchdown in the first minute of play of the second quarter as Tomasin again ran it in, this time from 30 yards out for a 14-7 Cardinal lead.

Newman rolled from there, as Miramonte was outscored in the quarter 21-3, with the lone field goal coming from 47 yards out from senior kicker Anthony Piganelli.

As the game went on, the Matadors tired out, and ended their playoff run with a 42-17 home defeat at the hands of Cardinal Newman. The Mats finished their season with an 11-2 record.



Anthony Piganelli makes the catch

Photo Jordan Fong

State Champions!

Campolindo Volleyball Takes the Title

By Alex Crook

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Left to right: Coach Scott Bishop, Anisa Smith, Mallory Loomis, Mary Vaccaro, Abbie Noland, Annie Shurtz, Chandler Moore, Brooke Standing, Lena Olufson, Sophie Seiberth, front row: Kit Koelzer, Sophie Smith, Stacy Drury, Cassidy Abel, Kim Condie

Photo Doug Kohen



Chandler Moore (#4)

Photo Doug Kohen

After countless hours of practice, patience and determination, the Campolindo girls' volleyball team finally got what they rightfully deserved, the Division III state championship.

The Cougars took down defending champion Cathedral Catholic, from San Diego, three sets to two on Saturday, December 4. Cathedral Catholic has played in the State Championship the last three years but Campo came prepared with a game plan that didn't need much alteration. Head coach Scott Bishop said, "Other than changing serving targets, we stuck to our game plan. We scouted them extensively."

Both teams came to play in the most important match of the year, and Campo had been preparing for handling the pressure all season. Bishop said: "From day one we teach that 'Pressure is a Privilege and Champions Take Risks.' We seek out pressure knowing that it has the opportunity to teach and grow. We try to distance our focus

on rewarding the win and only praise them for stepping up to meet that challenge."

Campo captured the momentum in the first set of the match. Both teams exchanged a one point lead early in the opening set, until four straight points for the Cougars gave them the edge in the first game.

Cathedral Catholic senior hitter and captain Taylor Milton led a comeback, and the Dons tied the score at 23.

Again, the one point lead went back and forth, but Campolindo held on to edge out the win in nail-biting fashion, 27-25.

The second set went almost identical to the first, with the designated host Cougars starting strong, and Cathedral Catholic fighting to get back into it. Late in the set, Campolindo rattled off three consecutive points, including a block by Cougar senior middle blocker Chandler Moore, tying the score at 20 and forcing Cathedral to call

time. But Campo held on to win 25-23 in the second set.

Campo fans started to believe that it would be possible to win their first state championship since 2006. On the other side of the court, Cathedral Catholic had other plans.

In set three, it was the Dons' turn to control the pace and Cathedral Catholic found their rhythm, with Milton leading the way. Despite three straight hits landing out of bounds, the Dons powered their way to a 25-21 set victory to force a fourth set.

In set four, things would again go Cathedral's way, as the Dons led the entire set to more comfortably force a fifth and final set, 25-18 and tie the score at two sets apiece.

The fifth set was hard fought and again the teams traded points early. The final point was won off a long rally which ended with Cathedral Catholic's error.

"I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to see them win in this manner. It made the victory so sweet," Bishop said.

Senior Campo hitter Mary Vaccaro was named Finals Most Valuable Player for her outstanding contribution to Campo's championship win; she recorded a double-double with 20 kills, 17 digs.

Vaccaro pointed to team effort as key to the team's success: "This season has been the greatest team experience for me, and I have never been on a team where everyone cares about each other so much. This season and state title were a total team effort, and that is what allowed us to beat teams throughout the season that looked better on paper, and to win the state title beating the best team we have faced all year. We have great individual players, but the best part about us is that we come together as a team more so than any other teams that center around one or two star players."

Vaccaro will play for West Point next year.

The Campolindo girls' volleyball team has a slogan of "Si Se Puede." The popular translation from Spanish is, "Yes we can." All season long, these Cougars never took their eyes off the prize and, in the end, their determination rewarded them with a state title.