

SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS



Saint Mary's Wins in Vegas

By Caitlin Graveson



Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's women's basketball experienced some ups-and-downs in the West Coast Conference tournament. On the positive side, the Gaels broke a two-year WCC tournament winless spell, dating back to the 2007-2008 season, and senior forward

ward Louella Tomlinson captured the Saint Mary's all-time scoring record. On the negative side Saint Mary's lost handily to Gonzaga for the third time this season.

Finishing in second place in conference play, the Gaels received a bye

until the semi-finals of the tournament. They opened the tournament against the University of San Diego on Sunday, March 6. Saint Mary's just edged out the Toreros in their last regular-season match-up and this game proved to be close as well.

The Gaels got off to a slow start, down 2-8 early. Coming off a career game against Portland just the week before, junior guard Alex Carbonel again proved to be the spark off of the bench Saint Mary's needed. She dropped a three, hit a lay-up and drew a foul to ignite a 7-0 run to get the Gaels back in the game.

Both teams traded points for the rest of the half. In the final minute of the half, Saint Mary's went on a 9-0 run to build a 44-43 lead heading into the break.

The Toreros stormed back in the second half to tie it up with 14 minutes

to play. The game remained close until the final minutes. Freshman forward Danielle Mauldin hit a huge shot and drew a foul with 42.9 seconds to play to give the Gaels a 67-65 lead. Saint Mary's held on from there to win, 71-68.

"We are really excited to get that first win in the WCC tournament. We had confidence and that really got us through the game," said redshirt junior guard Jasmine Smith.

Tomlinson captured the all-time scoring record in the first half of the game off a free-throw. She notched 21 points in the match.

With the win Saint Mary's advanced to the WCC Championship for the first time since 2001. The Gaels faced Gonzaga for a third time this season but yet again, could not outlast the dominant Bulldogs, losing 72-46.

"They are an extremely efficient team. We have to do our best to make

it a grinder game. If we keep it in the 60's we have a chance," head coach Paul Thomas said before the game.

The Gaels controlled the tempo and maintained a low-scoring game for the first 15 minutes of play. While the Gaels defense was stellar, their offense was stagnant. SMC shot just 23 percent from the field in the first half. Heading into halftime Saint Mary's was down eight, 20-28.

The second half was dominated by the Bulldogs. They outscored the Gaels, 26 to 44 to win 72-46.

Mauldin again came up big for the Gaels, leading SMC in scoring a career-high 19 points and adding ten rebounds.

The Gaels are guaranteed a spot in the WNIT tournament for the second year in a row. The bracket announcement was made late Monday night after the press deadline.

Lamorinda Baseball Preview

Acalanes, Miramonte off to a strong start

By Alex Crook



Acalanes' Grant Diede swings against Northgate in Acalanes' 3-0 win

Photo Doug Kohen

All three Lamorinda high school baseball teams are poised to have strong seasons and a chance at the DFAL title. Both Campolindo and Miramonte are coming off North Coast Section (NCS) Championship seasons, and Acalanes looks to build on improvements made last season.

Miramonte:

Last year, Miramonte finished in second place in the league standings behind Campolindo, but went on to win the division III NCS title, their second straight. The Mats return a first-team all DFAL out-fielder in junior Matt Bonomo, but lose two former first-team all DFAL nominees to graduation, third-baseman Michael Mann and catcher Kevin Paulsen.

The Matadors also return a

second-team all DFAL player from the previous year, junior pitcher Spencer Marx. Miramonte's roster consists entirely of upperclassmen.

The Mats are 4-1 and all four wins have come in dominant fashion. The lone loss was to Heritage (3-1-0), who also beat Campolindo. The Matadors are undefeated at home. They will open league play to defend their NCS title in Lafayette as they visit Acalanes on March 29.

Campolindo:

Campolindo, the defending DFAL and division II NCS Champion, finished last year with an 8-4 league record and an overall record of 21-7. A key returner for the Cougars this year is junior catcher Austin Rei, who was named last year's DFAL Most

Valuable Player. Rei hit .350 last season, with three homeruns.

Also playing a key role for Campo will be junior pitcher James Marvel and senior pitcher Matt Bruzzone. Marvel made first-team all DFAL last year with a 1.12 ERA, while Bruzzone was named honorable mention. Bruzzone will have to step up, though, to replace recently-graduated pitcher Nick Russ.

"We are all really looking forward to the year. We've got a solid core of young guys returning and we feel really comfortable with each other, just like a family. We've got some new guys working hard as well and as a team we've got some high expectations. It's going to be fun," says Marvel. Newcomers for the Cougars include sophomore in-

fielder Ryan Hooper and two freshmen, infielder Denis Karas and pitcher Matt Ladrech.

Campolindo is currently 0-2 after losses to Heritage and Clayton Valley (3-0-1); both teams are tough programs. The Cougars will open DFAL against visiting Dougherty Valley on March 29.

Acalanes:

Acalanes, although four years removed from an NCS title, has a history of success on the baseball diamond. Still, last year proved to be a difficult season for the Dons. They finished 15-10 overall, with a 5-7 league record and a fifth place league finish. Acalanes lost in the first round of NCS playoffs.

The Dons graduated pitcher

John Treat, but Acalanes returns first baseman Drew Gaylord and utility man Spencer Henderson.

Both juniors were named to the DFAL Honorable Mention Team last year. "I would not count us out of the NCS championships," said Evan Heptig, senior shortstop and captain for Acalanes. The Dons also welcome freshman shortstop Austin Fisher.

Acalanes is on a roll right now, boasting an early 5-0, which they will put to the test in their first league game March 29 against rival Miramonte. The five early wins were over Mount Eden, Bishop O'Dowd, Northgate, Skyline, and Sonoma Valley.



Miramonte's Chris Perry crosses home plate in the 8-3 win over Hogan.

Photo Linda Epperson

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