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Lamorinda Prep Basketball Will Fight for DFAL Title

By Conrad Bassett



Griffin Piatt (3) will return for the Cougars. Photo Doug Kohen

High school basketball season kicked off on Monday, November 7 with the first day of practice. For the first time in several years, the defending league champion is not Acalanes, Campolindo or Miramonte. Las Lomas won the Diablo Foothill Athletic League title last season with a 27-6 record and the Lamorinda programs look to take it back this year.

Campolindo's head coach Matt Watson expects the DFAL to be just as competitive as last year.

"Dublin is loaded just like Las Lomas and Dougherty Valley. Acalanes and Miramonte are also going to compete for the league title. The DFAL will be an extremely difficult league this year and unfortunately we are one of the smaller teams in the league," he said.

Last year's DFAL runner-up, Campolindo lost some key players but also will return several players from a team that went 19-9 overall and 8-4 in DFAL play.

This year's team will lack the height of recent Cougar teams. Garrett Franklin, 6'8", and point guard Carl King, another leader, graduated.

However, Campo does have some strong returners including Jordan Krumrei, Rob Wirth and Griffin Piatt, who was second team All-DFAL last season.

With an undefeated football team, Watson will likely have to go without several players while they finish up their playoff run. Piatt and Jack Davis play for both teams.

"There are several football players that play basketball, most schools must deal with missing football guys for a month so we just deal with it," said Watson.

The Cougars will have a tough preseason schedule including Castlemont (Oakland), St. Mary's (Stockton) and Christian Brothers (Sacramento). They will also travel to Santa Rosa for a tournament and will be leaving the state to play in Las Vegas over the holidays.

Over in Orinda, the Miramonte Matadors will be looking to improve on last year's 12-14 overall record and 5-7 DFAL record.

Coach Dave Brown returns for another year at the helm of the Mats and is excited about the upcoming season. Like Campolindo, the Matadors will do without some football players during the NCS playoffs. Seniors Ross Anderson, second team all-DFAL, and Jack Pietrykowski both play football.

"We have pushed our early season games back as far as possible. We only have three games before winter break but two four-game tourneys during the vacation. This is something we've never done before and three non-league games after January 1 while we usually have two," said Brown.

There is a positive to having to go without key players for so long, Brown said. It allows younger players to get experience early in the season.

While Miramonte lost Anthony Piganelli to graduation, they return juniors Kiran Shastri, Derek Lin, Matt Lim and sophomore Joey Goodreault. Five-of-the-six returners started at least five games last year.

Miramonte will play a strong pre-DFAL schedule. They open with a Foundation game hosting Alameda on November 22 before traveling to Hercules on December 2. The Mats will participate in two tournaments-traveling to San Luis Obispo for the Mission Prep Christmas and to Marin County for the Bambauer Classic right before New Year's.

In Lafayette, Coach Darrell Hirashima, Jr. is presented with similar challenges. Acalanes finished fourth out of the seven teams in the DFAL last year, only notching 13 wins overall.

He loses starters Brett Renner, Stephen Collins, and Michael Jackson, Jr. but returns several veterans. Senior forwards James Griffin, second team all DFAL, Trevor Masland, and Jon Coleman are back along with senior guard Kevin Huber and sophomore Noah Orlik. Newcomers include juniors Craig Anderson and Wesley Greason.

Hirashima noted that there is a transition time when bringing in football players. "Coming into practice a couple of weeks late, the football players also need some time to recover from the battering they take on the field,

get into basketball shape, learn the system, and dust off their fundamentals."

The Dons open their season hosting Berean Christian on November 22 and will be tested early when they visit perennial powers El Cerrito and St. Mary's (Berkeley) in early December.

The DFAL season starts right after the first of the year. All of the coaches agreed that the league should be very competitive. Las Lomas has graduated its two leading scorers and league co-MVPs, Treaven Duffy and Kevin Stafford, but will still remain strong and Dougherty Valley, Dublin, and Alhambra should all be improved.

"Dublin has had their key guys in prominent roles for multiple seasons. I would look for them to be playing with a renewed confidence this year. Las Lomas has a good talent base despite losing the co-mvp's to graduation. Dougherty Valley has been steadily improving since entering the league and will have very solid guard play," said Hirashima, Jr.

First Home Games of the Season:

Acalanes versus Berean Christian on

Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. (foundation game)

Miramonte versus Alameda on

Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. (foundation game)

Campolindo versus Hercules (Oakley) on

Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. (foundation game)



Miramonte's Joey Goodreault (24) dribbles up-court against Jack Evans (21) of Campolindo. Photo Jordan Fong



Stephen Collins (21) drives to the basket in heavy Miramonte pressure. Photo Jordan Fong

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