

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Miramonte Volleyball Drops Two in Rivalry Week

By Simon Tryzna



Mats' senior setter Ali Pietrykowski and sophomore middle blocker Lauren Foster. Photo Andy Scheck

The Miramonte Matadors' volleyball team had rivalry week in the true sense of the term, facing both Campolindo and Acalanes last week. The Mats played host to the Cougars on October 16 before traveling to face the Dons two days later. They were not able to achieve the results they were looking for though, dropping both games.

Wearing "Beat Campo" t-shirts during warm-ups, the Mats' expectations of an upset victory were quickly shattered as the Cougars got off to a 7-1 start that eventually became a 25-9 first set victory after an ace by senior Lauren Gaskin.

"First, there is a lot of history between these two teams," said Campolindo's head coach John Vuong. "We told our players to be poised and focused on the game and not what these fans are doing. In the first game we put a lot of pressure on Miramonte with our serve and when we got the free ball opportunity, we put it away."

Freshman Kirsten Sibley gave the Cougars a strong start in the second set, yet Miramonte hung close with good serves. They were able to cut the deficit to 15-16, after a controversial call gave the Mats a point. The call fired up both Campolindo fans and the team and the Cougars went on a 9-1 run to close out the set, winning 25-16.

The Cougars took their momentum into the third set and they opened up a 6-1 lead. But Campolindo faltered and after a series of miscues the Matadors stormed back into the set. Miramonte's ability to sustain long rallies allowed them to hang with Campo.

A shot into the net gave the Mats a 17-13 lead. The two teams traded points as the Mats, to the delight of the home crowd, were able to win the third set 25-19.

"We felt our team let down their guards and did not have the same intensity as the first and second games," said Vuong about dropping the third set.

However, Campolindo stormed right back in the fourth set. A kill by senior Annie Shurtz gave the Cougars a 6-3 lead, a kill by Sibley pushed the lead to 11-5. Behind strong serving by

Campolindo was happy to maintain their win streak.

"Being undefeated so far in league play is a blessing for our team," said Vuong. "All the winning is great and helps build our players confidence, but we told the girls that it is not how we start, it is how we finish at the end of the season that matters most."

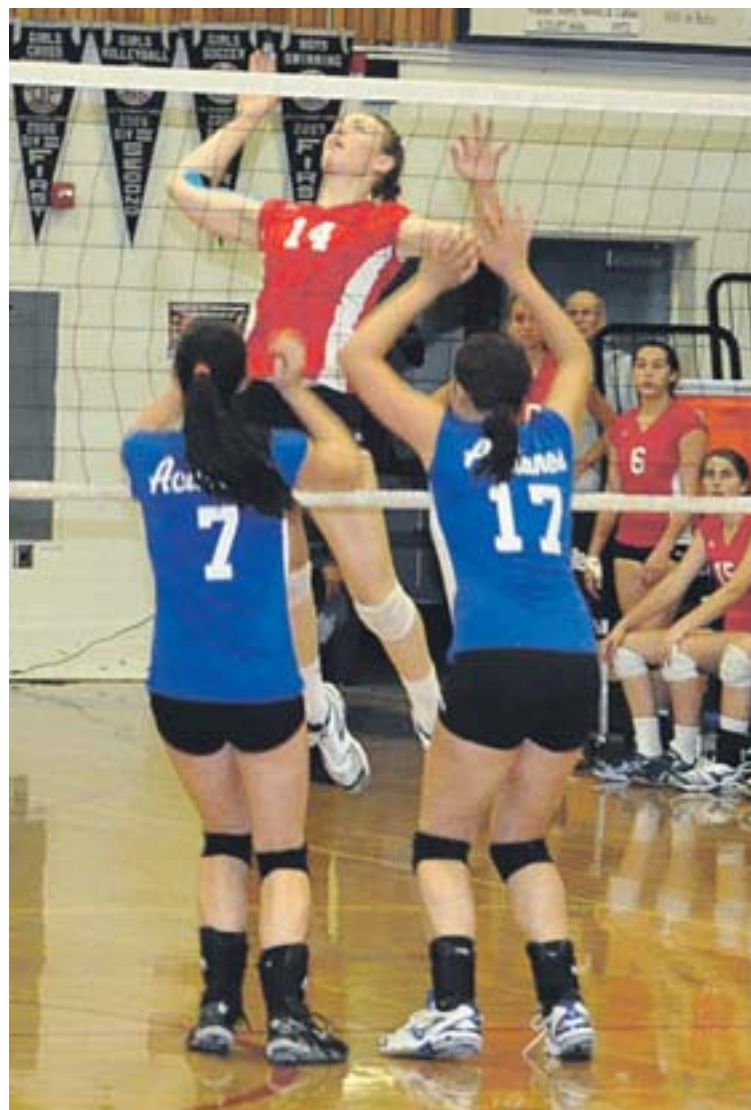
Things did not get much better for Miramonte as Acalanes defeated the Mats, 25-7, 25-23, 25-13. Amanda Jarquen and Brooke Aiello led the Dons with seven kills and Joanna Hamish had 36 assists. With the win the Dons improved to 4-5 in league play while the Mats dropped to 2-8.

Despite the two losses, Masedo is happy with where his team is now. "I think my team is playing well. I hope to finish strong (in league play) and hope that the girls keep playing to the best of their ability."

Acalanes, according to head coach Steve Siegman, has been inconsistent this year. After a couple of tough losses to Campolindo and Las Lomas, the team did a bit of "soul searching" in practice and responded with their best performance of the year against Miramonte. With a performance like that, Acalanes and its head coach have high hopes for the rest of the year. "I really would like to win our last three matches," said Siegman. "They are all winnable matches. Not easy, but winnable. If we play like we played last night, we should win."

Shurtz, the Cougars pushed their lead all the way to 17-8, before closing out the match with a 25-15 fourth set win to remain undefeated in league play.

"We started to lose focus a little bit [in the fourth set]," said Miramonte's coach Dave Masedo. "Once we started losing focus, we started to lose momentum and the match got away."



Annie Shurtz #14, Amanda Jarquen #17 Photo Andy Scheck



Brooke Aiello Photo Gint Federas

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