

Published December 19th, 2012

DFAL Soccer Kicks Off

By Marissa Harnett



Acalanes senior Ben Croze (#19) leads the Dons, currently ranked 10th in the state, in goals and assists. Photo David Lee

Campo's head coach Shane Carney noted the significance of the rapid-fire scoring. "(The) game was really decided by a six-minute span in the second half where we gave up three goals and lost one of our top performers due to injury," he said. "It was a very unfortunate span of time."

The Don domination did not let up until the fourth and final goal was netted with a kick to the upper right corner by Helfrich. The last 20 minutes remained scoreless with the game ending at 4-0.

This was the second win for Acalanes against Campo in a week. The two teams played in a neutral non-conference tournament just four days prior. Carney admits the losses affected his team's morale. "Losing twice right out of the gate is definitely tough for us to take," he explained, "but we really have to take things into perspective in that we lost both games to Acalanes who is likely the NCS favorite at this point."

Acalanes' strength is undeniable. They have been at the top of the standings for six of the last seven years. Their ability to field and coach three teams is a distinct advantage. Because of this depth, Acalanes can easily fill in gaps left by graduating seniors.

While the Dons graduated 13 out of 22 players last season, head coach Paul Curtis rejects the idea of rebuilding.

"We are able to alleviate rebuilding through a three team program that utilizes qualified and dedicated coaches [which] enables us to refill the roster with experienced, mature and dedicated players who are simply moving from one of our teams to a different one," he said.

Miramonte hasn't enjoyed the same luxury as Acalanes. The team has faced challenges with coaching consistency, rotating through three coaches in three years. New head coach Javier Ayala-hil is optimistic about their season.

Although the record doesn't reflect it, Ayala-hil feels the team has been doing well and keeping games close. "At the end of the day you have to put the ball in the back of the net. We have missed clear chances to come away with wins, but the team is progressing tremendously," he said.

The Mats showed their potential in their Dec. 12 match-up against the tough, undefeated Dons. Miramonte managed to hold the game even at 1-1 going into halftime, but in the end, Acalanes' Croze again led the team in goals and assists to log a 5-1 win.

Ayala-hil hopes his team will improve enough for the playoffs. "We have a clear goal to play as a unit and enjoy ourselves out on the field," he said.

The teams play one more league game on Dec. 21 before the season resumes Jan. 9.

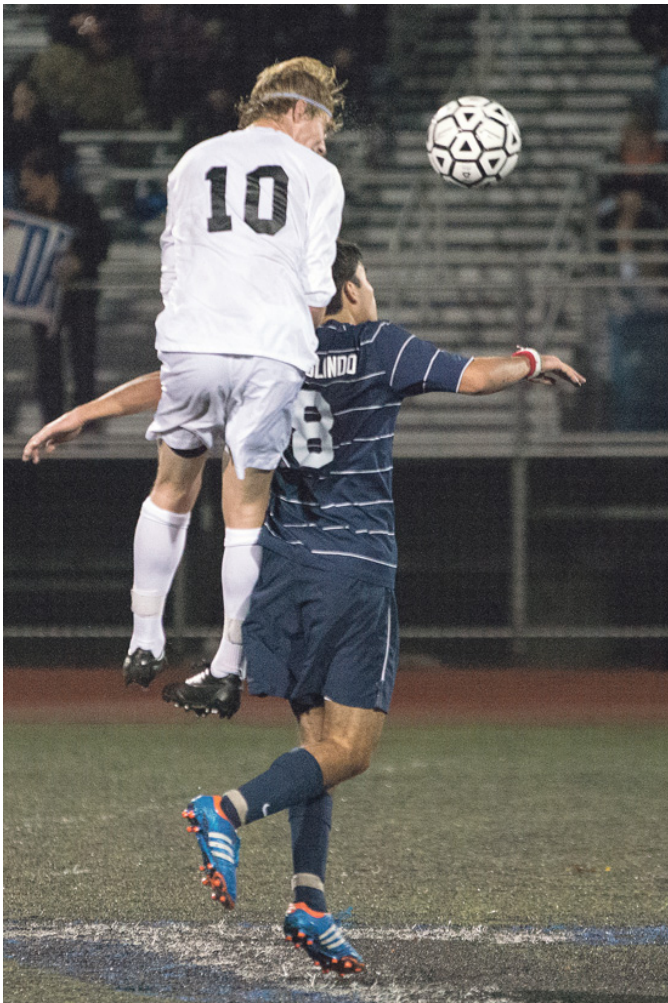
To date, Acalanes enjoys the top spot in the DFAL standings with a 4-0 record (8-0-0 overall). Campolindo stands at 2-1-0 (6-2-0 overall) and Miramonte follows with 1-2-0 (2-4-1 overall).

High school soccer tryouts had barely concluded when league play began at the beginning of December. Lamorinda teams faced off against their rivals in the first week of DFAL competition. In boys' play, Acalanes came out on top over both Lamorinda rivals, defeating Campolindo and Miramonte 4-0 and 5-1 respectively. Campo outplayed Miramonte 4-2 in their Dec. 7 match-up.

The first game on Dec. 5 pitted reigning DFAL champion Acalanes against 2011 NCS champion Campolindo. The first half was slow with both teams alternating possession, with a few shots on goal that neither team could convert. The game headed into halftime scoreless.

Following the break, both teams came back to the field newly energized. Within five minutes Acalanes scored twice. Junior Max Mirner nabbed the first goal, scoring off a corner kick two minutes in. After a breakaway run down the right line senior Dan Glascock netted the ball low into the left corner to make the score 2-0. Senior Ben Croze logged assists in both goals.

With momentum in their favor, Croze scored off of a pass from junior Mark Helfrich after a breakaway run by senior Graham Lindgren.



Max Mirner (#10)



