

Lady Mats Dominate DFAL Play

By Simon Tryzna



Carly Gill #13

After posting a 31-2 record last season and advancing to the state championship game, the Miramonte Matadors have reloaded and are once again proving themselves the team to beat. The Mats are 14-1 overall and 3-0 in DFAL play.

In preseason play, the Mats were the runner-up in the Nike Tournament of Champions in Phoenix and took

home the championship at the Bay Area's West Coast Jamboree. They were named fifth best team by Cal-Hi Sports.

"There are a lot of good teams ahead of us, and a lot of good teams behind us," said Miramonte's head coach Kelly Sopak on the ranking.

With the high ranking come high expectations and the Mats did not dis-

appoint as they dismantled the visiting Knights of Las Lomas 90-20 in their league opener Jan. 7. Two days later, the Mats traveled to Acalanes and had no problem with the host Dons, winning 81-20.

Led by senior point guard Carly Gill, Miramonte used a barrage of three pointers and stifling defense to race out to a 20-0 lead that would extend to 50-8 at half-time.

Knowing that any team can be upset any night, and keeping in mind that No. 25 in the country Cardonnet was upset by Monte Vista just the night before, Sopak wanted to make a statement.

"This is a league game," said Sopak. "The kids just come in and they know it's one game at a time and they do a really good job of that. It doesn't mean anything if you are a favorite. It's high school basketball."

After a competitive third quarter, Miramonte outscored Acalanes 15-2 to take home the 81-20 win.

The Dons are missing Molly Martin, a player who coach Chris Russell described as a "walking double-double." Martin is out for the season with a knee injury.

"We've had some injury issues as well as some self-inflicted things that have kept us from not quite playing

our best basketball during the preseason," said Russell. "I thought we played a really soft schedule and should have won a minimum of ten games heading into league instead of being 7-7."

Despite the blowout loss, Russell found this to be a good lesson for his team. "This game is just to make us tougher and better for games that we should win," he explained. "I think we should challenge everyone else just fine."

Miramonte took on Campolindo Jan. 11. The Cougars played a tough preseason schedule as well and provided the toughest competition the Mats have faced in league play this season. While the Mats used their stifling full-court press to cause Campo turnovers, they were plagued by poor shooting, which allowed Campolindo to hang in the game.

However, whenever the Cougars got a basket and some momentum, the Mats quickly pushed the ball up court and scored a basket of their own. Freshman guard Keanna Delos Santos led the way for the Mats, who led 42-21 at the half and wound up winning the game, 79-48.

Despite the loss, Campolindo coach Elgin Leslie was proud of the way his team played and strongly be-



Keanna Delos Santos #11

lieves his team has what it takes to finish close to the top of the league standings.

"We have the goal of improving with each game, and I think we have done that," said Leslie. "Every game presents a tough challenge, so we must keep improving to keep pace with the teams in our league."

The next rivalry game is on Jan. 22 when Campolindo hosts Acalanes at 7 p.m.

Cougars Remain Undefeated

By Marissa Harnett



Julia Reshke #23 had a hat trick in the 5-1 win over Acalanes. Photo Andy Scheck

The New Year marks the midway point in the high school soccer season. January also brings Lamorinda rivals back to the turf for the second round of games. The Acalanes girls hosted undefeated Campolindo on Jan. 11. Miramonte takes on Campo Jan. 18 and then hosts Acalanes on Jan. 25.

Current standings place Campo at the top with a 6-0-1 league record and 8-0-2 overall. Acalanes sits at the bot-

tom of DFAL with 1-5-1, but overall the Lady Dons boast a 6-6-2 record. Miramonte is in the middle with 2-4-1 and 3-5-1 overall.

However, records are often not a true reflection of the level of play. "We have had some tough matches where we have played well and created more opportunities than our opponent, but suffered a close loss or tie," Acalanes head coach Tom Ginocchio commented.

Despite Acalanes and Campo occupying opposite ends of the standings, Friday night's re-match promised to be competitive. In their first face-off in December, Acalanes handed Campo their only league tie this season. Both coaches recognize that the competition is strong and games hinge on converting scoring opportunities into actual results. "On any given day, anyone can give you a battle...every game has the possibility of not going your way," Campolindo's head coach Ernesto Silva explained.

The Cougars came out of the gate strong on Friday. Just one minute into the game, Campo had an early break-away to score with a low shot to the right corner. Ten minutes later, junior Julia Reshke duplicated the first goal as part of her eventual hat trick for the night.

Acalanes had some good chances to score, but they could not penetrate the Cougar defense.

Toward the end of the half Campo's goalkeeper, senior Sophie Leksan, left her net to take a free kick at goal in an attempt to notch one more for the Cougars. The attempt was blocked, giving Acalanes a chance at an empty net, but Campo raced back to defend. The half ended with Campo up, 3-0.

After the break, the girls came

back fighting to create an opening to score. Half way through, Acalanes' patience paid off. Senior Becca Bostwick snuck the ball along the right side of the net to cut the lead 1-3. However, Campo came back and scored two more to end the game 5-1.

Ginocchio was disappointed with the loss. "It was a tough result, giving up that early goal really was not the tone I wanted to start the game," he said.

Still, Ginocchio believes in his players. "We have a solid group of girls...we have the ability to be very good, just have to keep working."

Silva credits Campo's success to how quickly the players have come together. "This team is one of the most cohesive teams I've had in the 11-12 years I've been coaching," he said. "The talent is high and we have many great players."

On Jan. 18, Miramonte will have a chance to break Campo's six-game winning streak. Coach Mohamed Mohamed, back after a two-year hiatus, will attempt to lead the Lady Mats to victory. Miramonte held Campo to a tight 2-0 result in their first match, but will need to play at a high level to stop the Cougars.



Annie Loose #6

Miramonte Splits Rivalry Series

By Michael Sakoda



Kiran Shastri #21 Photo Kevin Nguyen



Matt McCue #45 Photo Andy Scheck

Boys' basketball DFAL play began last week with two rivalry games for the Lamorinda schools. Acalanes (6-10) played host to Miramonte (8-8) on Jan. 9 and then on Friday, Jan. 11, Miramonte traveled to take on Campo (11-4).

The Mats split the rivalry series. They earned the 61-47 win against the Dons, but dropped their match-up against the Cougars, 54-66.

Prior to the matchup, Acalanes head coach Darrell Hirashima said his team has struggled this year. "The guys are still learning how to execute under pressure," he commented. "We need to be able to run our offense, play hard-nosed defense, and that hasn't always happened."

Another factor in the Dons' struggle is that junior center Buster Souza has been the focus of most defenses throughout the preseason. "He's always going against two, sometimes three guys," Hirashima explained.

The match-up against Miramonte was no exception.

"Acalanes has a really nice center in Buster Souza, and we played a team defense against him," Miramonte head coach Drew McDonald noted after the game.

"This was a big win for us," said McDonald. "...we had good performances from a number of our guys...across the board we had a nice team effort."

Miramonte traveled to take on Campo just two days later.

The Mats controlled through much of the first half, scoring six unanswered points to start the game, and led 17-10 after the first quarter. Through the second quarter, the teams traded baskets, getting 10 points each from Campo's sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly (18 total), and Mats' senior forward Kiran Shastri (19 total).

With just under a minute to play in the half, Cougar senior Matt McCue drew a charge forcing Shastri to the bench with his third foul. A few plays later, McCue scored off a Jack Evans steal, cutting the Miramonte lead to two.

At the half, the Cougars trailed 30-26. "We didn't give up our composure, and we stayed with what we do," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson.

Campo opened the second half on a 13-0 run. Miramonte's subsequent 6-0 run was silenced by a three from O'Reilly.

The Cougars led 47-39 heading into the fourth. Miramonte returned to their first half execution about midway through the quarter, and cut the Campo lead to six with under a minute to play, but the Cougars held on, beating the Mats 66-54.

"This group has struggled with patience all year," McDonald said of Campo's second half burst. "(Campo) picked up their pace...our shot selection got worse, and the tempo got away from us."

"We needed to be fundamentally sound," said Watson after the game. "I gave them an earful at halftime, and they responded."

With 10 games to go in the season, all three

teams are looking good. Acalanes notched its sixth win Friday against Dougherty Valley, Campo's tough preseason seems to be paying dividends, and Miramonte is working Kiran Shastri back into the rotation. He missed the last month with tendonitis in his knee.

Rivalry games resume on Jan. 22 when Acalanes faces Campolindo at 5:30 p.m.



Buster Souza #1 Photo Kevin Nguyen