

Miramonte Earns Lamorinda Bragging Rights, Prepares for Playoffs

By Hunter Hewitt



Junior forward Breanna Alford had 27 points and 12 rebounds against the Dons. Photo Ohlen Alexander

With the postseason approaching, Miramonte (24-1, 11-0) continued its stellar season by defeating its Lamorinda rivals for the second time and remaining undefeated in DFAL play.

The Matadors hosted Acalanes (11-13, 4-6) on Feb. 1, and the result was a near replica of the previous matchup between the two teams.

The Dons, who hoped to avenge their 81-20 loss to Miramonte in January, struggled again with the relentless full-court pressure of the Matadors.

Miramonte came out aggressively from the start, scoring the first 15 points and building a 52-12 lead at halftime. The second half wasn't much different.

Behind nine points, eight assists and five steals from senior guard Carly Gill and 27 points and 12 rebounds from junior forward Breanna Alford, Miramonte cruised to an 86-23 victory over Acalanes. Senior guard Jamie Jacobs led the Dons with eight points.

"Overall, we played hard and didn't quit," Acalanes head coach Chris Russell said. "Miramonte is a great team, but our execution on finishing shots really hurt us."

Fortunately for the Dons, they were able to bounce back from the loss with key victories over Dougherty Valley and Alhambra on Feb. 4 and Feb. 6, respectively.

Miramonte hosted Campolindo (20-4, 8-2), its other rival, on Feb. 4. The Cougars, who en-



Jamie Jacobs #33 Photo Kevin Nguyen

tered the game with the second-best record in the DFAL, were looking to hand the Matadors their first loss in league play.

Following another quick start by the Matadors, Campolindo was able to narrow the margin to seven points in the second quarter, but it was all Miramonte from there. Senior forward Laura Hickey led the Cougars with 12 points.

Junior guard Megan Reid, a dual-sport star who missed the Acalanes game because of a soccer match, helped lead Miramonte to an 80-43 win. She finished with 18 points and five steals.

"That's a great team," Campolindo head coach Elgin Leslie said of the Matadors. "We have to play our best and hope they have an off night to beat them, and neither of those happened tonight."

After defeating both Acalanes and Campolindo twice this season, Miramonte now holds the unofficial Lamorinda crown. Although the bragging rights are enjoyable for the Matadors, greater hopes have emerged as playoffs near.

Last season, Miramonte entered the postseason undefeated, but fell to the eventual state champions Bishop O'Dowd twice — once in the North Coast Section (NCS) finals and again in the Northern California regional finals. With both schools playing extremely well again this season, a rematch in the playoffs is almost inevitable.

Matadors' head coach Kelly Sopak continues to repeat a "one game at a time" mantra to his players, but a common goal is surely present amongst them.

"We want to take every opponent seriously, but our goal is to win the last game of the season," he said. "We want another shot at O'Dowd."

Gill echoed the sentiment. "We're taking it one game at a time, but I think we're further ahead than last year," she said. "We have so many threats, it's incomparable to any team I've ever been on."

When asked about a possible rematch with Bishop O'Dowd, Gill admitted that the thought of revenge had surfaced, and that her team will embrace the challenge if given the opportunity.

"We are definitely ready for that one," she said.

The NCS playoffs begin on Tuesday, Feb. 19.



Senior forward Laura Hickey #32 led the Cougars with 12 points against the Mats. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Home Court Advantage

Miramonte Defeats Rivals in Homestand

By Michael Sakoda



Drew Anderson #2 goes for a shot against Buster Souza #1. Photos Ohlen Alexander

Miramonte (15-10) went 2-0 on its home floor against Lamorinda rivals Acalanes (9-16) and Campolindo (17-7).

On Feb. 1, the Mats routed the Dons, 56-41. The game was decided in the first quarter where Miramonte's defense forced seven Acalanes turnovers. Mats senior guard and co-captain, Derek Lin, set the tone for his team, picking up three steals in the first half.

"They played very aggressively on defense, and that forced our guys out of their fundamentals," said Dons head coach Darrell Hirashima after the game. "We needed to calm down and do things simply. If we had come out with a little more composure instead of trying to regain it, we would have had a much better shot."

Acalanes found themselves down nine in the first quarter, but they did their best to battle back, getting 13 points and six blocks from junior center Buster Souza. Still, it wasn't enough to overcome Miramonte's stifling defense.

"We only allowed 41 points," said Miramonte senior forward Kiran Shastri after the game. "That was one of our goals, to keep the score down. Everything went our way."

The Mats got 19 from their bench, led by 13 points, three steals from junior forward Drew Anderson on their way to a 15-point victory, 56-41.

On Feb. 4, Miramonte saw its second home game against a Lamorinda rival as they hosted Campolindo in a game that came down to the final buzzer. Again, the Mats opened the game with tough defense, forcing six Campo turnovers in the first quarter.

Miramonte junior guard Joey Goodreault scored eight first quarter points giving the Mats a 18-14 edge after the first.

Campo out rebounded Miramonte 26-10 in the first half, getting several second chance points from sophomore center Chris Hansen (10 points, seven rebounds), and junior forward Justin Dunn (16 points, 10 rebounds).

At the end of the first half, Campo

trailed 27-24.

Campo captured the lead in the third quarter by limiting their number of turnovers and riding the offensive onslaught of sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly, who scored 11 of his game high 22 in the third quarter.

"We wanted to come out with a lot of intensity in the second half," O'Reilly said after the game. "We wanted to make a run."

The Cougars had a 51-45 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The fourth saw back and forth play from both teams, and after a pair of back-to-back threes from O'Reilly that gave Campo a 56-63 lead with 2:13 left to play, the game seemed all but over.

With under a minute to play, Shastri scored two of his 12 fourth quarter points on a put back. Goodreault picked off the subsequent Campo inbounds pass and scored, cutting the deficit to 66-67. Campo then turned the ball over in the front court with 28.9 seconds left to play.

Goodreault caught the inbounds pass for the Mats with 14.5 seconds on the clock. Cougar guard Andrew Zolitakis (11 points, six rebounds, seven assists) went for the steal, but Goodreault drove to the basket.

He scored the biggest bucket of his team high 17 points with 4.8 seconds left on the clock. "We drew up a play," said Miramonte head coach Drew McDonald about the waning seconds of the game. "When it fell apart, Joey drove to the basket."

Miramonte held on to win 68-67.

"You're never going to win a game when you turn the ball over that many times," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson. "We did a better job in the second half, but we didn't take care of it in the last thirty seconds of the game, and that killed us."

Acalanes hosted Campolindo Feb. 12 for the final rivalry game of the season. Postseason play begins on Feb. 19.



Chris Hansen #44 had 10 points, seven rebounds in the loss to the Mats.



Joey Goodreault #24 had a team-high 17 points, including the game-winner for the Mats.

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