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## Mats, Cougars Finish Strong Season in Playoffs

By Michael Sakoda



Derek Lin Photo Kevin Nguyen

Lamorinda was represented in the NCS playoffs by Miramonte (17-11) and Campolindo (18-9). Miramonte finished third in the DFAL and Campolindo finished second.

With a 5-seed, Miramonte played in the opening round of the playoffs, while No. 2 seed Campolindo earned a bye.

The Mats stomped De Anza 87-58 in the first round on Feb. 19.

The win was a team effort as all five Miramonte starters scored in the opening quarter, and they forced five turnovers to earn a 22-13 lead.

"Coach said before the game we should run on these guys," said Mats senior guard Derek Lin. "Their transition defense wasn't the best, so we hustled, got rebounds and got out on the break."

Miramonte led 45-26 after a tremendous half where they grabbed 20 boards and dished out 11 assists on 18 field goals.

"We made huge progress moving the ball this year," said Mats head coach Drew McDonald. "The guys are sharing the ball... it's great to see."

Senior forward Kiran Shastri had a game high 17 boards. "I just tried to find the ball and get into transition," said Shastri. "That allowed us to pick up momentum and get the score up."

In the second half, Miramonte continued pounding the glass, grabbing 29 boards, including seven from junior Drew Anderson, and five from sophomore forward Jake Linares.

"I said at the beginning of the season the two things we wanted was to improve defensively and to improve on the rebounding side of things," said McDonald. "Tonight, we saw both efforts."

The Mats season concluded Friday as they lost 66-82 at Drake, but McDonald and his players are pleased with the year.

"We started peaking at the right time," Shastri said. "We got wins against Campo and Dublin and that got us going to the second round of the playoffs."

Over in Moraga, Campolindo took the court Feb. 22 at home for a dog fight with the Mustangs of San Marin.

Sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly and senior guard Matt McCue struggled to score early, but the Cougars got a boost from senior guard Jack Evans, who scored three off the bench in the first quarter. After one quarter, though, Campo trailed 12-15.

San Marin opened up a nine-point lead in the second quarter, but Reilly's only first half field goal made it 26-33 at halftime.

"We didn't play with great energy," said Cougars head coach Matt Watson about the poor first half showing. "It didn't feel like we were giving everything we had. We weren't sprinting the floor. We weren't giving great on ball pressure. We were missing assignments. It just wasn't there."

Campo came out strong in the third quarter, cutting the lead to three, 33-36, with 6:01 to play on a bucket from junior guard Andrew Zolintakis. San Marin responded, going on a 14-6 run over the next 2:49 to take a 39-50 lead. The Cougars scored eight straight over the next minute, but the Mustangs scored the final four of the quarter, and Campo faced a seven-point hole heading into the fourth.

The Cougars fought hard in the fourth, getting a transition bucket from McCue, and a three-pointer from senior forward John Schmitz to make it 55-56 with 3:37 left. With a little over three minutes to play, O'Reilly tied the game from the line 57-57, but that was all Campo would score.

The Cougars lost 57-62 and were eliminated from CIF contention.

"The shots weren't falling," said Watson, "that will happen...but the body of work this season was fantastic... I'm disappointed to lose, as the players are, but I'm very proud of them."



Drew Anderson Photo Kevin Nguyen



Matt McCue Photo Andy Scheck



Matt O'Reilly Photo Andy Scheck

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