

Mats, Cougars Finish Strong Season in Playoffs

By Michael Sakoda



Derek Lin Photo Kevin Nguyen



Drew Anderson 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.

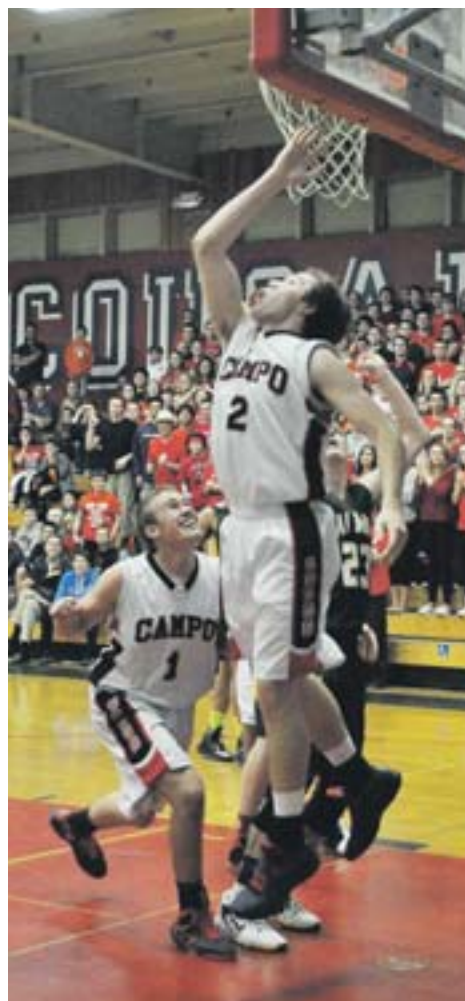
The Cougars fought hard in the fourth, getting a transition bucket from McCue, and a three-pointer from senior forward John Schmitz to make it 55-56 with 3:37 left. With a little over three minutes to play, O'Reilly tied the game from the line 57-57, but that was all Campo would score.

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."



Matt McCue Photo Andy Scheck



Matt O'Reilly Photo Andy Scheck

Miramonte, Campolindo Meet in NCS Semi-Finals Tonight

By Conrad Bassett



Courtney Seyranian Photo Kevin Nguyen



Ashley Ewing Photo Andy Scheck

Two Lamorinda rivals will meet for the third time this season in the NCS semifinal match. The Miramonte Matadors (26-1 overall) beat the Campolindo Cougars twice in the regular season en route to a perfect DFAL record and the DFAL title. The Cougars (23-4) finished second at 10-2, losing only to Miramonte. The Mats host the Cougars tonight, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m.

Both teams had first round NCS byes and won home games Feb. 22.

Miramonte blasted the Encinal (Alameda) Jets 104-61. "It was a fun night," said head coach Kelly Sopak. "The players bought in to our 'All One' philosophy tonight. It was great for them to have so much success as we had not played a game since Feb. 12."

Over in Moraga, Campolindo hosted the Novato Hornets. They came out strong by scoring the first 11 points of the game. Senior Laura Hickey hit two free throws to start the game and added four more baskets in the first four minutes.

"This was a big game for us tonight. As seniors we want to continue to play and we came out strong," Hickey said, "We

spent a lot of time working on shooting this week in practice and we did well."

Hickey was a force on the court with several rebounds and blocks. She set up guards senior Courtney Seyranian and junior Ashley Ewing for good looks from outside. Seyranian nailed six three-pointers and Ewing added four, helping the team to a 64-20 lead after three periods. The Cougars won 65-30.

Seyranian finished with 18, Hickey with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Ewing had 13 points, seven assists and eight rebounds.

Coach Elgin Leslie felt this was one of the best games the team had played all year. "I felt we could push the ball tonight," he explained, "After the disappointment of not making the playoffs last year the girls had something to prove and have been on a mission all year."

"The whole team was excited to get in our first playoff game. We worked hard every day and prepared and then we went out and did it," Seyranian added.

With their quarterfinal NCS wins last week, both teams have qualified to go on to the Northern California tournament. The winner of tonight's game will play for the NCS title.



Sabrina Ionescu #20 Photo Andy Scheck



Breanna Alford Photo Andy Scheck

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