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Water Polo Teams Ready for Competition

By Marissa Harnett



Miramonte went 5-0 in league last year and look to repeat their success. Photos Gint Federas

losing to the Cougars by one goal in the NCS Finals. However, Acalanes graduated five seniors (four starters) who played in key positions - goalie and both offensive and defensive centers. Still, head coach Misha Buchel is optimistic about the upcoming season.

"The challenge for our coaching staff is going to be the development of some of the raw talent we have and getting them to contribute in various roles." Buchel explained. "That said, I'm confident we're going to be in the mix at the end of the season."

Miramonte poses a significant threat to Campo's dominance this year. The Mats have been consistently strong, reaching at least the quarterfinals in NCS each year. This year they have a seasoned squad, returning five of six starters. Head coach Trevor Rose likes their chances of doing well this season.

Boys:

Miramonte has been the team to beat for the last two decades. The NCS trophy has been theirs for 13 of the last 18 years. Despite losing some strong seniors, younger players are already stepping up to the challenge of filling those shoes.

"I have enjoyed seeing that many of the players have improved greatly during the off season due to some hard work," said head coach James Lathrop.

Miramonte, who went 19-9 overall and 5-0 DFAL last year, will need to answer to their tough rivals. Both Acalanes and Campolindo were strong last year, finishing their seasons 14-13 (3-2 DFAL) and 17-7 (4-1 DFAL) respectively.

Campo comes into this season down some key players, including J.D. Ratchford, arguably the best shooter in the NCS. Still, head coach Miles Price is confident they can make up for what was lost to graduation.

"We are coming into the season with a very fast and talented young team," he explained. "I think our advantage lies in our speed, defense and the work we have put in during the off season."

Acalanes advanced in last year's quarterfinal match for the NCS title against the higher-seeded Cougars, but then lost to Miramonte in the semifinals. The Dons hope to take back the title they earned in 2010. "Every year we aim to win every game we play," explained head coach Clarke Tamariki.

He added, "To beat the Mats you need everything to work out right. They are well coached, and realize their place in such a strong program. That is the program we all hope to have."

Rivalry Games: girls' varsity at

5 p.m.; boys varsity at 6 p.m.

10/2 - Campo @ Miramonte

10/9 - Acalanes @ Miramonte

10/30 - Acalanes @ Campo

While many high school students soaked up the last few days of summer vacation, the water polo teams were in the pool gearing up for the intense season ahead.

Practices began Aug. 19, and non-conference matches fill the September schedule. In October, DFAL competition begins. All six Lamorinda teams, the girls' programs and the boys' programs, are in contention for the title.

Girls:

Campolindo has consistently been a target for their Lamorinda rivals, and for teams from around Northern California. Winning two of the last three NCS championships and going 26-1 last season, Campo is likely to remain the team to beat.

The Cougars graduated three seniors (two starters), but gained talent from the JV squad (Ellen Gerst) along with three key freshmen, Becca Buck, Kari Jensen and Olivia Price.

"We have clear values, objectives and goals each season. If we stay focused on those and continue to build on our strong work ethic, the program will continue to be successful," said head coach Kim Everist.

Acalanes proved to be a threat to Campo last year,



Campolindo boasts a young, talented team this season.



Despite losing key starters from last year, Acalanes is poised to make a run at the title.

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[back](#)

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