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Lamorinda Prep Water Polo in NCS

By Marissa Harnett



Campolindo's goalie Spencer Tagg was key in the team's success this season. Photos Gint Federas

played a tough schedule in preparation for playoffs. "It's been a tough season but it's the only way to get better," said head coach Miles Price. "Each game we learn something new, which is the idea behind a tough schedule."

The strategy has paid off. Although they lost to Miramonte in league play, the Cougars are hoping for a rematch in the NCS final. Campo starts its campaign on Nov. 7 at home.

In the final match of the DFAL regular season on Oct. 30, the Cougars celebrated Senior Night with an 11-8 win over Acalanes. In an extremely physical game, the Dons stayed with the Cougars through the first quarter. By the end of the third quarter, Campo enjoyed a comfortable five-goal lead. Acalanes came on strong at the end to narrow the gap to three goals, but it was not enough.

"We played good team ball, our goalie, Spencer, played excellent and everyone contributed for a good win and a good season finishing first in DFAL," Price said.

With a 12-14 overall record (2-3 in DFAL), Acalanes missed the cut for the NCS playoffs this season.

The Campolindo girls went undefeated, finishing first (5-0, 21-3 overall) in the DFAL. They earned the top seed in the NCS playoffs and a first round bye. Miramonte came in second with a record of 4-1 (18-6), losing only to Campo. The Mats got the No. 2 seed in the playoffs and will also have a bye. Acalanes finished the season at 2-3 (13-11). The Dons earned the No. 4 seed and will face Encinal at home tonight, Nov. 6.

Campo demonstrated their dominance in last week's action against Acalanes, defeating the visitors 14-4.

The Acalanes girls fought hard, but after a very early 1-1 tie, the Cougars pulled away and widened their lead to six goals by the end of the half. In the third quarter, Acalanes put together a few successful plays narrowing the gap to five, but by the fourth quarter, Campo surged and ended the game 14-4.

Acalanes head coach Misha Buchel was impressed with his team's tenacity in the face of tough competition. "The girls played hard from start to finish. We just don't have much margin for error this year - we need to play perfectly in a game against a team like Campo," he explained.

Acalanes could face Campo in the semi-final round, should both teams make it that far.

Miramonte hopes the fifth time is the charm to beat the Lady Cougars. Dropping the first four matches this season, the Mats won't have the opportunity again unless they reach the finals.

Miramonte head coach Trevor Rose also notes teams have to be perfect to beat the Cougars.

"They've got so many weapons it's tough to beat them. We've gotten close a couple times, but they're so well coached that we simply can't make mistakes," Rose explained. "We've got the personnel, speed, and mental toughness needed to bring home a win ... but again ... it would have to be a perfect game."

After a tough regular season, the Lamorinda prep water polo teams are gearing up for NCS title runs.

Boys' water polo had an unusual finish to the DFAL season. Las Lomas, Campolindo (18-6), and Miramonte (16-8) finished the season with 4-1 records in league play. According to DFAL rules, a three-way tie is settled by drawing a team from a hat. After a lucky draw, Campolindo took the league title from defending champions Miramonte.

Although the DFAL title was taken in a game of chance, Miramonte remains focused on continuing their dominance in the NCS. Winning the title six times in the last seven years, the Mats look for a three-peat this year. They earned the No. 1 seed and will play on Nov. 7.

Head coach James Lathrop feels they've had a successful season and have improved with every difficult match-up. "I am pleased that our team faced several challenging opponents throughout the season, which challenged us to raise our level of play and consistency," he explained. "Each time we play a challenging opponent, it shows us things that we need to improve upon to be better."

Campolindo, the No. 2 seed in the NCS, has also



Hannah Kresnak (5) and Kari Jensen (3)



Rachael Lewin (16) and Emma Myall (8)

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[back](#)

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