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Soccer Season Underway

Big Rivalry Match This Week

By Marissa Harnett



Dons earned their first DFAL win over Dublin last Friday. Photo Gint Federas

As last season's DFAL winner, Acalanes is arguably Campo's biggest rival. Finishing the 2012-2013 season with an overall record of 23-1-3 (11-0-2 in league), the Dons have consistently produced strong results and have earned the NCS title four times in five years.

However, a bumpy start to the 2013-2014 season finds the Dons fighting to regain traction. The Winter Classic produced disappointing results as the Dons went 1-2-1. A 2-1 loss to Alhambra followed in their league opener last Wednesday.

Still, head coach Paul Curtis is not worried. "The roster has 23 boys and they are working hard to come together as a single cohesive and productive unit," he explained. "This year, there are a significant number of new players on the varsity team and so that process will take some time," Curtis continued. He views the results as an "opportunity for growth and improvement."

Acalanes has seen major personnel turnover including graduating 25 players over two years. Also for the first time ever, three freshmen earned spots on the varsity roster. Curtis feels good about the season ahead - the Dons overcame Dublin in their second league game, perhaps signaling an upward trend - as well as in the coming years noting the deep young talent and particularly strong freshman team. "It bodes well for the future of the program," he said.

Miramonte, who has struggled with consistency and continuity over the last few years, performed well at the Winter Classic finishing with a 2-1-1 record and a third place trophy in the Bronze Division.

New head coach Billal Samy is excited to take the helm at Miramonte, a task that comes with many challenges. Second to battling injuries, helping players move from club soccer to high school is a significant hurdle. The short pre-season along with ability differentials make high school soccer a difficult transition.

Samy is up to the task though. "If the proper training environment is implemented, players of different backgrounds/abilities may have a better chance to put forth a strong, collective and competitive effort," he explained.

Samy is happy with the results so far, logging six goals for and only three against in the opening tournament. Although the Mats fell to Dougherty Valley in their season opener, Samy is confident. "We definitely have the personnel to compete at this level," he said.

As the fourth coach in as many years, Samy has simple aspirations. "My goal is to prepare the team to compete," he stated. "NCS is always a target, but developing players and planting the seeds for the next few years is the first goal."

Upcoming rivalry action at 6:15 p.m.:

Friday, Dec. 20 Acalanes @ Campolindo

Friday, Jan. 10 Acalanes @ Miramonte

Wednesday, Jan. 15 Miramonte @ Campolindo

Just as surely as winter blows in, so does the high school soccer season. Training since mid-November, the season is just getting underway. Preceded by only one pre-season tournament, league play began on Dec. 11.

In boys' soccer, Campolindo is off to a hot start, winning the Winter Soccer Classic, Silver Division, on Dec. 7. After an erratic start last season, Campo hit a groove and surged to reach the NCS finals finishing the season 18-8-2 overall (7-4-1 in league).

Despite their strong finish last year, the team lacked confidence going into this season. "Although we got better last year as the season went along and completely exceeded expectations, the sting of finishing second in everything (Winter Soccer Classic, DFAL and NCS) definitely carried into the offseason and into this season," head coach Shane Carney explained. "It was hard for us to enjoy our unexpected success last year when we kept coming up just short."

The Dec. 7 win helped Campo solidify their confidence. Adding to their momentum, the Cougars also nabbed their first two league games against Las Lomas and Alhambra.



Campolindo is 2-0 after defeating Alhambra last Friday. Photo Gint Federas

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[back](#)

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