



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published May 21st, 2014

## Mats Take Second in NCS Tennis Tournament

*By Clare Varellas*

The Miramonte varsity tennis team huddled next to their home courts on May 13, as the captains rallied their players, who in turn clapped each other on the back, voicing words of encouragement. About to take the courts in their first playoff match in the North Coast Sectional (NCS) tournament against Cal High, the team was fired up and ready to focus on the matches to come that week. "It's more of the mental preparation," said Miramonte senior David Ellman. "These are the biggest matches of the season."

At the same time, the Acalanes Dons prepared to face Analy High School in their first playoff match. After three more rounds of playoffs, Miramonte secured a second place finish in NCS on May 17. Acalanes lost to Miramonte in the second round, ending the Dons' season.

Both teams entered the sectional tournament after successful individual-based DFAL tournament play May 1-3, with notable wins by Acalanes' Ryan and Dan Cardiff and Kyle Everly and Miramonte's Peter Martin, Neil Weikert, Kyle Rechnitz, Bryce Hummer, and Alex Huang. The teams' deep talent pools allowed each of them to easily win the first round of matches, with Miramonte beating Cal High 6-1 and Acalanes beating Analy 7-0.

Inter-league rivalry and similar levels of ability created heated competition on May 15. Miramonte narrowly beat Acalanes 4-3. Miramonte's Huang defeated Acalanes' sophomore Everly to break the tie and take the win.

Acalanes had defeated Miramonte twice before during the season in normal league play, winning 6-3 both times. But in NCS play, the number of matches played in each round is seven, instead of nine, making the three doubles matches even more important. Miramonte, known for its impeccable doubles talent, shifted its lineup slightly to take advantage of the change.

"We spend a lot of time especially from midseason on developing strong doubles, and that paid a lot of dividends when we beat the number three team, Acalanes," said Miramonte coach Michael McColom.

Acalanes' season ended after that match, but Miramonte went on to play against San Ramon Valley in NCS semifinals on May 17, securing another 4-3 victory using the same strategy. Later that afternoon, the Mats faced off against No. 1 Dougherty Valley and were defeated 6-1, finishing in second place.

Both Acalanes and Miramonte hope to improve in seasons to come. Miramonte, after losing several key players from last season, was content with its high-ranking NCS finish, earned by weeks of hard work by the remaining and newer players.

Acalanes had what coach Brent Bird calls the most incredible season in its history, overtaking Miramonte and Campolindo in normal league play to take a number two spot behind Dougherty Valley. Bird says that he plans on developing the team's doubles skills in 2015, which will come in especially handy during next year's NCS tournament.

As NCS finalists, the Matadors will be playing in the CIF tennis tournament in Sacramento on May 23-24 against the most highly-ranked teams in Northern California.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA