

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## 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 Mators will be playing in the CIF tennis tournament in Sacramento on May 23-24 against the most highly-ranked teams in Northern California.

## Cougars Look to Fourth Straight NCS Title

Miramonte knocked out

By Marissa Harnett



Campolindo prepares to take the court in the NCS tournament.

Photos Gint Federas

Halfway through the NCS volleyball championship, top-seeded Campolindo is the only Lamorinda team remaining. The Cougars, who boast an overall season record of 32-2 and went undefeated, 10-0, in league play, have held the NCS title for the last three years and their chances of a fourth look promising.

"I feel like if we choose to keep our focus and our motivation to play fundamentally sound disciplined volleyball our chances are high," head coach David Chen said. Chen knows not to take anything for granted though. "We're also focusing on the

concept of the team's worth and how that alone can help to lead the team toward success or without it, drive us to fail," he added.

With only 11 teams in the bracket, Campo enjoyed a first round bye and moved directly to the quarterfinals. In that round on May 16, the Cougars dispatched Miramonte's ouster, No. 8 Livermore, in less than an hour - 25-12, 25-15, 25-13.

The Cougars appeared confident from the start and immediately surged ahead, keeping Livermore on the defensive. The Cowboys managed to string together a few winning plays, but scored mostly

on Campo's few errors.

Livermore found a groove in the second set and kept the score differential hovering around one until Campo junior Ryan First started serving. His rocket serve notched seven consecutive points, creating a gap impossible for Livermore to close.

The Cowboys kept fighting into the third set. They took the lead early on, but as in the sets before, they were no match against Campo. In play after play junior Joe Worsley set the ball for senior Stephen Buhl to make the kill. Junior Jack Eisner and First also nailed winning strikes.

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Jack Eisner (11) recorded key hits in the win over Livermore.



Joe Worsley (1) led the Cougars' rally with strong serves.

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