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## Baseball Teams Fall Short on NCS Repeat

By Michael Sakoda



Doug Nimmra Photos Gint Federas

After a tough regular season, Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte all battled during a great run in the NCS baseball playoffs.

Acalanes (16-12; 6-6 DFAL), led by two seniors - pitcher Doug Nimura and shortstop Austin Fisher - earned the No. 7 spot in the Division III playoffs.

After winning three consecutive NCS titles, the 2014 Dons' road through the postseason was tougher. "We thought we were seeded a little low," said head coach Justin Santich-Hughes. "Being the No. 7 seed made our run a lot more difficult."

But Acalanes stepped up, getting a boost from sophomores Jake Berry and Tommy Henderson, and won their first and second round games - at Del Norte 6-1 on May 21 and at Drake 5-3 on May 24.

The Dons faced No. 3 Tamalpais in the semifinals on May 28 and ran into the Redtailed Hawks' red-hot pitcher, Mason Collins. The Dons managed only two hits off of Collins, and gave up two runs - an RBI single in the fifth inning and a

sixth inning bases-loaded balk - falling 2-0.

"This was our first postseason loss in 12 games, and being on the losing end was shocking," said Santich-Hughes. "But for these guys to go as far as they did was a testament to the competitiveness they've shown all year and I'm proud."

Miramonte rounded out the year with a 14-13 record (7-5 DFAL) earning the No. 6 seed in the Division III playoffs. In the opening round, the Mats hosted No. 11 Albany in a two-day, 18 inning thriller. On May 20, the two teams played 15 innings, but the score remained tied at 2-2.

Play resumed May 21 with junior Connor Jackson on the mound for Miramonte. He was superb, throwing 44 pitches (31 strikes, 13 balls), striking out five, with no walks, four hits and a run allowed.

Albany scored first, and led 3-2 in the bottom of the 17th. With two out and one on, Drew Anderson trailed in the count 0-2. Alex Gutierrez advanced to second on a wild pitch, and Anderson slapped the 1-2 past Albany's shortstop, sending Gutierrez home, tying the game 3-3.

In the bottom of the 18th, with one out and one on, it was Mats' sophomore James Vaccaro, with the walk-off, as he crushed the 0-1 fastball to left center, scoring Logan Boersma, sealing a 4-3 victory for Miramonte.

"Eighteen innings and nobody flinched," said head coach Vince Dell'Aquila. "It might have been the single most well-played, hard-played, heart-played game in North Coast."

Miramonte ended a strong season on May 23 with a second round, 2-0 loss to Tamalpais. "The season was like the (Albany) game," said Dell'Aquila. "It had ups and downs, but the guys hung in there. It's a credit to them ... through all of it they kept battling."

Campolindo wrapped up the regular season going 20-5 (11-1 DFAL), winning a league title and locking up the No. 1 seed in the Division II Playoffs. But their run ended before it really began as the Cougars dropped an opening round game 1-0 to No. 16 Casa Grande on May 21.

It was a true pitchers' battle between Cougars left-handed pitcher Matt Ladrech and Casa Grande's Eric Parnow. Ladrech was outstanding, pitching a complete game, with four strikeouts,

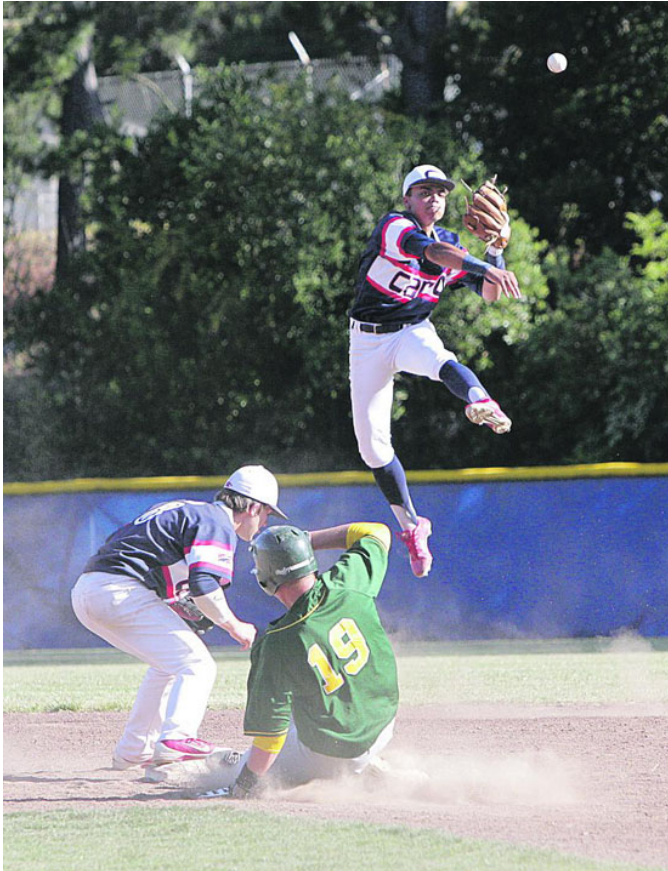
seven hits, a walk and a lone run in the second inning, but the run-support lacked.

Campolindo threatened in the sixth, as Denis Karas stole second after being hit by a pitch, but Parnow struck out the next two batters ending the inning. Scott Singh led off the seventh with a single to right, but again, Parnow struck out the two subsequent batters. With one on and two out, Ben Skinner flew out to right, stranding Singh, and ending the season.

"(Parnow's) a tough pitcher. He threw well," said Cougars head coach, Max Luckhurst. "We saw him about a month ago, and he threw well then too."



Drew Anderson recorded the game-tying RBI in the 17th.



Campolindo gets the out at second and looks for the double play at first in the loss to Casa Grande.

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