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Lamorinda's Friday Night Lights

By Michael Sakoda



After a summer of running drills and practice in the hot sun, Lamorinda teams will test their readiness this Friday night in preseason match-ups. Photos Gint Federas

According to Schram, Ray Clark will be replaced by committee. "A couple of kids who played really well at the JV level have come up and will carry the ball," he said. "Jared Childers, Nick Vacakis and Blake Peterson."

And as far as a repeat of last year's magic, Schram said it's certainly in the cards.

"We could go anywhere from 0-10 to 10-0, it just depends on whether they trust the system, trust each other and gel as a team," he said. "Last year we had great senior leaders, but they graduated, and it's time for this senior class to step up."

They'll have a chance to do so as they host Pinole Valley on Friday.

Campolindo went a perfect 10-0 (6-0 DFAL) during the regular season, and in the Division III playoffs the Cougars won a second round NCS rivalry matchup against Acalanes before having their hopes dashed by eventual champion El Cerrito in the semifinals.

Head coach Kevin Macy described this summer as a rebuilding process, and this season as a new chapter for Campolindo football.

"We haven't been in this position for a long time; everybody is new, between quarterbacks and receivers," Macy said. "We lost a great receiving core, Justin Dunn, Phil Rei, and Hunter Rosenbaum, and a great quarterback, Andrew Zolintakis."

Macy is looking to an all new set of receivers to complement his Duke-committed senior tight end Tyler Petite.

"Tyler can deal with double teams, but I imagine some teams will triple team him, and that's why we need to get our receivers up to speed," said Macy.

Jack Stephens will quarterback the Cougars, and while no official starters have been named at receiver, Macy mentioned that seniors Caleb Whalen, Max Flower, Adam Remotto, and Tiger Garcia (who is currently sidelined with a torn AC in his shoulder) are among those being considered.

High school football kicks off Friday after Lamorinda teams have put in a summer of hard work.

Miramonte went 8-2 (5-1 DFAL) last season, then began a triumphant post-season, defeating Tennyson, Northgate, Clayton Valley Charter and Casa Grande, on their way to a Division II NCS Championship.

"All of our seniors are key losses," said head coach Jack Schram. The Mats lost all five starting offensive linemen, standout quarterback Drew Anderson, a handful of receivers, running back Ray Clark, both cornerbacks, and a few linebackers.

At quarterback, Schram said he's considering a few candidates - senior Sam Tuttle, and juniors Sutter Lindberg and Ryan Anderson.

Anderson's name should be familiar to readers, as he was one of older brother Drew's favorite targets during the Mat's post-season run a year ago.

"[Ryan] got better and better last year; if he's not quarterback this year, we definitely have to have him on the field at receiver," said Schram. "He's a great playmaker, so if he plays QB, the other receivers will have to step up and become playmakers too."

Also returning for the Cougars is running back Nick Fadelli, but putting together a line that can help utilize his skills has been challenging.

"We were struggling to identify five kids to play offensive line in a situation where we just don't have linemen," said Macy. "One kid who's going to help us is Ryan Geisreiter."

Geisreiter, a career defenseman, is set to make the transition once he recovers from mononucleosis.

"We're not going to be like other teams we had where we come out of the gate confident and strong," said Macy. "We want to get into the playoffs and hopefully by then, we'll be a threat."

The Cougars visit Heritage on Friday.

Acalanes wrapped up its 2013 campaign with a 7-3 record (3-3 DFAL), and knocked off Sonoma Valley in the opening round of NCS play before being upended by Campolindo.

But the Dons aren't looking back, and head coach Mike Ivankovich said he's excited for the new season.

"Casey [Harrington] is coming back, so offensively we'll be able to pick up where we left off," he said.

Harrington, a senior quarterback, played huge down the stretch for the Dons after taking over the position from then-starter Robbie Stern.

"Casey really has a great command of the offense, so we'll be able to expand it," said Ivankovich. "We'll put pressure on defenses because he can call audibles, change plays; he's at that level now."

Acalanes, though, lost a 4-year starter in Peter Mitchell, who left big shoes to be filled at running back.

"It's up to the next guy to step up," said Ivankovich simply. "At running back, that's Jared Finney and Leo Barakos."

The Dons opened league play last year with three straight losses, and Ivankovich said they're looking to change that this year.

"Our focus is to come out strong at the beginning of the season, to play with confidence coming in," he said. "We need to do a better job against the run, and that's what we've been working on."

Acalanes hosts Antioch on Friday.





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