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Lamorinda Football Dominates Opponents

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Casey Harrington Photo Gint Federas

After wrapping up the DFAL regular season the first week of November, all three Lamorinda football teams headed into the NCS playoffs last week. Campolindo (11-0, 6-0 DFAL) took the No. 1 seed in Division III. Acalanes (8-3, 4-2 DFAL) earned a No. 5 seed. Miramonte (3-8, 2-4 DFAL) is Division II and earned a No. 12 seed.

On Nov. 7, Miramonte played at Dublin and the DFAL season wrapped up with a Lamorinda showdown between Acalanes and Campolindo.

Miramonte took care of business against Dublin, winning 34-21. "We knew going in that's what we had to do to qualify [for the NCS playoffs]," said Mats' head coach Jack Schram about the win.

In the rivalry game, the Dons ran the ball through the first half. Nathan Edwards moved the chains for the Dons' offense. Quarterback Casey Harrington took advantage of the field position, running in a 1-yard touchdown in the first quarter and finding Matt Burns for a 9-yard touchdown in the second. At halftime, Acalanes was down 19-13, but it was set to receive the ensuing kick.

"We played a great first half," said Acalanes head coach Mike Ivankovich. "The issue was we stalled on offense and didn't stay with them in the second half."

The Cougars ran away with the game, outscoring the Dons 29-0 in the final two quarters.

Senior running back Nick Fadelli, who notched three touchdowns on six carries in the first half, turned it on in the second, finishing with 225 yards on 15 carries to go with five touchdowns. Quarterback Jack Stephens picked apart the Acalanes secondary, completing 12 of 19 passes for 215 yards and a 25-yard touchdown to Max Flower.

"I think forcing the three and out to start the second half, then scoring right away just changed everything," said Campolindo head coach Kevin Macy. "We made [10-0] our goal, and the kids felt that this was their championship."

On Nov. 14, Campolindo played Ygnacio Valley in the first round of the NCS, while the Dons hosted Bishop O'Dowd.

Campolindo dismantled the Warriors, 52-14, scoring the opening 21 points. The Cougars took a 38-7 halftime lead. Stephens completed 6 of 7 passes for 115 yards and three touchdowns. Sophomore Noah Loeliger (two touchdowns), led a committee of three Cougar backs who found the end zone.

With the win, Campolindo will now face No. 8 Cardinal Newman on Nov. 21.

"They're really not an eight seed," said Macy. "When you look at all the other second round games, no doubt we have the hardest."

Acalanes similarly cruised through the first round, hammering Bishop O'Dowd 49-20 last Friday, in a game where Harrington could do no wrong, completing 11 of 15 passes for 300 yards and four touchdowns and rushing four times for 36 yards and a touchdown.

After Harrington threw a 76-yard bomb to Tyler Henderson on their second play from scrimmage, Burns picked off an O'Dowd pass on the first play of the Dragons' next drive. Six plays later, Edwards scored on a 1-yard run, giving Acalanes a 14-0 lead.

"We executed our plan," said Ivankovich simply.

With less than a minute to play in the first half, Burns grabbed his second interception, setting up Acalanes with a first and 10 from their own 31. Harrington found Chad Johnson for 55 yards on their first play, then connected with Jack Thoren for a 16-yard touchdown.

Johnson caught for 156 yards and a touchdown to lead an outstanding receiving core. Edwards rushed for 113 yards and a touchdown. The Dons travel to No. 4 Analy, this Friday for a game that promises to be exciting.

On Nov. 14, Miramonte traveled to Casa Grande in a rematch of the NCS Division II finale last year. Heading into the first round, Schram was optimistic but wary. "We beat them last year in the championship, but this isn't last year. They struggled early, but they're a heck of a lot better than their record, but I think we're a heck of a lot better than ours."

Unfortunately, the Mats offense faltered against a stout Gauchos defense, and they fell, 48-6, ending their post-season run as abruptly as it began. They'll look to bounce back next year, with standouts Ryan Anderson, Sutter Lindberg, and Clayton Stehr set to return.

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