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Lamorinda Football Dominates Opponents

Acalanes, Campolindo advance in NCS playoffs

By Michael Sakoda



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.

NCS Rivalry Series Continues with Volleyball

Campo, Acalanes face off in semifinals

By Scott Wu



Molly Dalziel



Kirsten Sibley Photos Gint Federas

The girls' volleyball NCS playoffs are underway and the intensity is growing with every spike. All three Lamorinda high schools made this year's Division III playoffs. Campolindo (26-7 overall) earned the No. 1 seed, Acalanes (21-8) took the No. 4 seed, and Miramonte (21-10) earned the No. 6 seed. After the first two rounds, Campolindo will host Acalanes in the semifinals tonight, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m.

Head coach John Vuong is proud of the team's No. 1 seed because he knows that his team has worked hard to earn the ranking. "Being the top seed should not be new to the girls. We worked very hard during the season so that we could earn this opportunity," said Vuong.

The Campolindo Cougars have not yet lost a set in the NCS playoffs, which is reflective of their dominant season. They beat No. 16 El Cerrito and then No. 8 Albany with ease. Albany challenged the Cougars in the second set, recording a 22-25 loss, but the Cougars won the first and third sets by double-digits.

In the semifinals, Campolindo will play host to Acalanes, a team they swept twice during the regular season. However, looking ahead to the Nov. 19 match, Vuong can point out two things that his team needs to do in order to ensure a win.

"We must limit our unforced errors and be better in our execution of the free ball opportunities," said Vuong.

The Acalanes Dons, who beat both No.

13 San Rafael and No. 5 Petaluma, will look to upset the Cougars. The Dons will have to play an away game for the first time in the playoffs, but head coach Todd Travis doesn't see it as an added challenge.

"Playing in front of our friends and families at a familiar site is very advantageous, but we won't be doing anything different from our normal routine," said Travis.

After finishing 9-3 in the DFAL, Acalanes took second place behind Campolindo. Although they did not take a set during their regular season match-ups, Travis is hopeful that their experience this season will help them in the postseason.

"We purposely scheduled a really tough preseason, so we have been through many games with playoff intensity by the time NCS rolls around," said Travis.

Earning the No. 6 seed, Miramonte traveled to face No. 11 Del Norte of Crescent City. Despite the long journey, the Mats pulled off a win in straight sets. With the win, Miramonte advanced to face No. 3 Sonoma Valley on Nov. 15.

"Traveling 8 hours to our first round game was difficult, but it did not change our mentality going into Saturday's game," said head coach Lisa Bachtold. "We wanted to go out there and play with no regrets, whatever the outcome may have been."

Miramonte lost in a four-set match. Their best effort came in the second set, when they defeated Sonoma 25-21.

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