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Lamorinda Keeps Winning

By Conrad Bassett



Taylor Jones

Junior forward Taylor Jones has stepped into a leadership role for the Dons, working hard to collect rebounds and stop opponents through solid defense.

"She is asked to do all the dirty work and just recently received the West Coast Jamboree MVP so her effort for that type of scrappy play was noticed," Wellon explained. "What makes her great is she doesn't care about anything except helping her team win."

The Dons are also getting help from sophomore Emma Godfrey, who is averaging nearly 10 rebounds a game, and sophomore Brooke Panfili, a transfer from Campo. In the first game where Panfili was eligible to play, she hit four 3-pointers against her old team and led the Dons with 15 points.

At Campolindo, head coach Art Thoms has seen the team chemistry building on and off the

The three Lamorinda girls' basketball teams have all had success this year as they head into the second half of the Diablo Foothill Athletic League season.

As expected, perennial frontrunner Miramonte started the season strong. The 17-2 Mats are currently ranked No. 12 in the United States with their only losses coming to national No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana) and Hawaii's top team, Konawaena.

Head coach Kelly Sopak noted that playing a tough schedule has allowed the team to grow.

"We are a work in progress but are making strides in the right direction and the scheduling was paramount for us," he said. "I knew going into the season that we needed to play a national type schedule in order for us to reach our potential."

Sopak cited the development and improvement of freshmen Clair Steele and Jordyn Bryant, sophomore Elle Louie, and junior Keana Delos Santos as reasons for the team's continued improvement.

He also spoke highly of one of the nation's top recruits, junior Sabrina Ionescu, saying he has not seen anyone better in his 10 years coaching in the DFAL.

"I continue to push her, but more and more I am catching myself watching her in amazement. I am a much better coach with her on the floor!" he joked.

In Lafayette, head coach Chad Wellon has already won more games this year than all of last season as the Acalanes Dons sit at 14-4. "We started winning early in the year and I think the team just expects it now," he said.

Wellon noted that he emphasizes hard work. "Our goal going into every game is to play harder than the team we play because I feel like that is something that is within our control."

court every week. "I knew blending six seniors, a junior, and five freshmen was going to be a challenge. The team has really come together as the season has progressed."

Freshman Haley Van Dyke has made a huge impact, leading the team in points, rebounds, steals and blocks. Senior captains Rachel Sniderman, Kaylyn Murray and Ashley Dubrasich have stepped up as leaders as well. "Rachel sets a great example of support and building team chemistry, Kaylyn is a floor leader and Ashley is a vocal leader," Thoms explained. "All three have led to a positive locker room and fun season."

At 10-8, the Cougars have picked up some key victories, including a win against a strong Oakland Tech team that handed Acalanes their only non-league loss. In the win, Van Dyke had 16 points, 17 rebounds and six blocks.

As always, the DFAL is one of the premier leagues in Northern California and Dublin at 17-2 joins Miramonte and Acalanes as the first three in the DFAL standings.



Haley van Dyke



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