



UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital
Oakland

SPORTS MEDICINE
CENTER FOR
YOUNG ATHLETES

OAKLAND
510-428-3558

SAN RAMON
925-979-3450

WALNUT CREEK
925-979-3430



Lamorinda Keeps Winning Girls' Basketball Mid-Season Report

By Conrad Bassett



Taylor Jones



Haley van Dyke



Jordan Bryant Photos Gint Federas

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."

Junior forward Taylor Jones has stepped into a lead-

ership 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 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.

Lamorinda Teams Set to Square Off with Playoff Hopes in the Balance

By Spencer Silva

Nearly three-quarters of the high school basketball season is in the books and the playoff picture is coming into focus. Campolindo (15-2) is putting the finishing touches on another brilliant season — they're regarded as one of the best teams in the Bay Area. Acalanes (5-13) and Miramonte (10-9) have less certain paths. Both teams have losing records against D-III schools, and they'll need a number of key wins against D-III opponents. Both teams need upset wins over titan Campolindo.

Campo owns a 10-game win streak and Miramonte's recent defeat of second-place Dublin High places Campo firmly in the DFAL's driver seat. Head coach Matt Watson, however, believes his team's best basketball is yet to be played. "We have a couple of football guys that are just getting adjusted," he explained. "We are hoping to hit our stride in the middle of February."

The Cougars will be tested over the next few weeks with a slate of games against second-place Dublin, then Acalanes and Miramonte. "In high school, any team can win, especially in rivalry games," Watson said of the upcoming games. "Acalanes and Miramonte are well coached, play extremely hard and have tremendous fan support, which makes both of them difficult to beat, especially on the road."

In spite of the Dons losing record, they can still qualify for the NCS Division III playoffs by closing the season with wins over Campolindo, Miramonte and Alhambra. The Dons have played a tough schedule, and while it won't be easy qualifying for NCS, one of their five wins came against a strong Liberty High School team, helping their case for an NCS bid.

The Acalanes Dons had a crucial double-overtime win over the Alhambra Bulldogs on Jan. 23. The win was highlighted by an impressive 37-point performance from senior guard Joey Hewitt. Hewitt is the team's offensive leader, averaging more than 20 points per game.

If the name Casey Harrington sounds familiar, it's probably because he started as quarterback for the Dons last fall. He didn't play basketball his junior season, but he has used his raw athleticism to become one of the team's most valuable assets on the court.

It's been a process getting all the new faces on the same page, but the formula hasn't changed much, according to head coach Dave Goldman. "We've focused on defensive intensity and running our offense," he said. "We don't score a lot of points, so we like to slow the game down and try to keep (our opponents) in the 50s."

Miramonte reached the NorCal semifinals for the first time in school history last winter, but they're going to need good fortune to repeat. They have two games left against league-leading Campolindo. If the rivalry weren't in and of itself enough, the Mats need to win at least one of those games to qualify for the playoffs. Campo's only league loss last season came at the hands of the Mats, so it's safe to say there will be no charity when the two teams meet.

Miramonte's up-tempo offense has buoyed the team all season. Seniors Jackson Wegener, Jake Linares and Moneer Mujaddidi engineer it. Head coach Drew McDonald spoke of the three captains' invaluable "experience and presence" on and off the court. He sees the underclassmen coming along too.

The Mats have struggled in league play, but their win over second-place Dublin on Jan. 23 could be the boost they needed. "We're struggling right now," McDonald explained before Friday's win. "We came into league play with a winning record, and we've known that we have to get better as the season goes along."

The Mats look to get back to their winning ways against Las Lomas before taking on Campolindo on Jan. 31.



Joey Hewitt



Chris Hansen



Jackson Wegener Photos Gint Federas

Wrestling Teams Aim for NCS

By Karl Buscheck



Front row, from left: Jose Herrera, Zach Francis, Alex Jang and Max Hahn

It's crunch time in the DFAL wrestling season.

The NCS Dual Meet Championships are looming on Feb. 14 and all three Lamorinda high school squads are battling to claim a spot in the competition.

With seniors Alexander Jang and Zachary Francis leading the way, Miramonte owns a 2-1 record in DFAL action. As head coach Jose Herrera explained, the team has also received key contributions from an array of underclassmen.

"We've had these young guys step up out of nowhere, put in the time and now our team is mostly young, hungry athletes," said Herrera, who has grown the program from eight wrestlers to 40 in the four years that he's been in charge. "We have an extremely young

team where when we graduate our seniors, we're not going to be down at all. We might even be better."

To open up the season, the Matadors beat Acalanes on Dec. 11 and topped Dublin on Dec. 18. On Jan. 15, Miramonte lost its first league meet to Dougherty Valley, the reigning DFAL champs. With three matchups remaining on the schedule, the team has one clear objective: to finish in the top three at NCS.

"Our goal is to qualify for North Coast Section Duals and bring back a banner, a team banner," said Herrera.

Campolindo is also trying to win a banner of its own. With a 0-3 record in DFAL competition, the Cougars have plenty of work to do. So far, Campolindo has dropped meets to Dougherty Valley on Dec. 18, Alham-

bra on Jan. 8 and Las Lomas on Jan. 15.

"We're not where I want to be yet," said head coach Bob McLaughlin. "We need to go 2-1 or 3-0 to make it to NCS Duals, and I think we'll do better as the season progresses. The team's working hard. The kids are doing well. Sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you."

Seniors Trevor Martinho, Eric Monasevitch, and Jason Pollock have been the Cougars most consistent wrestlers, while sophomore Avery Novick has also been impressive. McLaughlin is confident that his team will make the necessary adjustments in the second half of the season to earn a trip to NCS Duals.

"It's a process and I think the kids are aware of where we need to get to, and they're working hard to do that and I think they will," McLaughlin added.

Acalanes is also in need of a strong second-half showing if the team is going to make an NCS appearance. The Dons have a record of 1-2 in DFAL after claiming their first league win over Dublin on Jan. 8.

Acalanes began the season with back-to-back losses to Miramonte on Dec. 11 and to Alhambra on Dec. 18. The Dons still have three meets on the schedule including a rivalry matchup against Campolindo on Feb. 5.