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## Mats Beat Cougars for NCS Title

By Spencer Silva



Gina Crosetti scored the winning goal for the Mats. Photos Gint Federas

Miramonte junior Gina Crosetti found the goal she had been looking for all afternoon in the 80th minute of the NCS Division II title. With Crosetti's last-minute goal, No. 5 Miramonte defeated No. 3 seed, defending champion, Campolindo 1-0, securing their first title since 2009.

The winning play started with a deflected ball on the left wing. Moments later, Crosetti was gliding to her right, into the box while sending a game-winning shot past Campo goalkeeper Emily Parish.

Crosetti and teammate Cecilia Gee worked as a tandem all afternoon, nearly creating goals in the 67th and 71st minutes. The first opportunity was a shot from just outside the box that sailed over the crossbar. The second effort was a cross from Gee that nearly

found a limb on the far side of the goal.

What was it about that final minute?

"I think it was our drive to finish, looking at the clock and knowing what needed to get done," Crosetti explained gleefully after the match.

It's fair to say the Matadors (12-3-6) were an underdog heading into the tournament. To reach the final, they had to secure road victories against No. 4 seed Alhambra and No. 1 seed Acalanes.

Their semifinal win in Lafayette over the Dons may have been the most thrilling match of the tournament. Miramonte came from two goals down to force overtime before eventually winning on penalty kicks.

But don't count Miramonte coach Mohamed Mohamed

among those surprised by his team's accomplishment.

"The signs were there. We felt we were the most dangerous team coming into the playoffs," he said after the match.

Campolindo (14-6-3) defeated No. 7 seed St. Mary's 2-1 to reach the final. They defeated Las Lomas the year before to win the Division II title and Saturday was their chance to repeat.

The Cougars' best opportunity came in the 47th minute, but forward Annie Midthun's goal was called back after a defensive foul. The Cougars were unable to convert on the set piece.

The "advantage rule" states that a referee should allow play to continue if it's likely to benefit the team being fouled. Therefore, the decision to whistle the play dead was quite controversial. In fact, it may have shifted the momentum of the game.

Campo coach Ernesto Silva expressed his disappointment with the call. "I knew that this would be a game where the difference would maybe be one goal," he said. "That play, if called properly, changes the game."

The Cougars played tough defense throughout, consistently thwarting their opponent in the final third until the game's final minute.

Miramonte graduates just two seniors and they hope to contend for another championship in 2016. For now, however, the Mats will be content to ride the current wave of joy.

Crosetti may have put it best: "It's kind of a dream; I don't feel like it's real. Tomorrow hopefully it will kick in, but right now I'm just really excited."



Cecilia Gee was a force for the Mats.



Katharine Nerone celebrating Crosetti's goal.

## Saint Mary's Loses in WCC Quarterfinals

By Michael Sakoda



Carli Rosenthal Photos Tod Fierner



Brad Waldow

Like the fate of those in casinos around Orleans Arena in Las Vegas, the basketball teams of Saint Mary's College seemed to have had the odds stacked against them for a shot at the NCAA tournament.

The women's team wrapped up their season with a 20-9 record (13-5 WCC) earning the No. 4 seed in the WCC tournament. The Gaels drew a tough quarterfinal showdown with BYU on March 5.

It was a thriller, featuring 18 lead changes, several within the last two minutes, but BYU's Lexi Eaton dropped in the game winner with two seconds left, sealing a 65-64 heartbreaker for the Gaels.

"We really tried, and sometimes that just happens," said senior Carli Rosenthal, who finished with 14 points (4-4 FG; 6-6 FT), 12 rebounds.

Trailing 63-62 with under a minute to go, Rosenthal came up with a steal, and scored a put-back on the ensuing possession, giving Saint Mary's a 64-63 lead with 19 seconds left, but Eaton would get the final shot.

"Carli makes a play ... and the bench is going crazy. Seconds later, they make a play. That's what college basketball is all about," said head coach Paul Thomas. "Unfortunately, one team had to go home."

The Gaels turned heads this season, and Thomas was one of three coaches to be named WCC Co-Head Coach of the Year, while freshman Stella Beck was named WCC Newcomer of the Year, juniors Lauren Nicholson and Shannon Mauldin

were named to the all-WCC first and second teams, and Rosenthal was named honorable mention all-league.

The men's team rounded out the regular season with a 21-8 record (13-5 WCC), good enough for the No. 3 seed in the WCC tournament, but a hungry Portland team proved to be too much for the Gaels on March 7.

The Pilots took a 32-26 lead into the locker room at the half, and it only got worse from there, as the Gaels squad was routed 69-52.

"I didn't push the right buttons to have them play well," said head coach Randy Bennett. "No excuses."

Portland beat Saint Mary's in just about every way, outshooting SMC 50 percent to 30 percent, out rebounding the Gaels 31-30 despite a considerable size disadvantage, and handing out 11 assists to the Gaels' four.

"We didn't come out with the normal energy and passion," said senior Brad Waldow, the only Gael to put up strong numbers (25 points, 8 rebounds).

Waldow's hard work didn't go unnoticed this season, as he and Kerry Carter were named to the WCC's first team, with senior Aaron Bright earning an all-league honorable mention, and Emmett Naar being selected to the WCC's Freshman Team. Accolades aside, this loss could cost the Gaels a shot at the NCAA Tournament, a disappointing end to an incredible season.

For now, Bennett, Thomas, and their teams will have to keep their fingers crossed, waiting to find out if the cards hold a postseason berth.

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