

Published March 25th, 2015

Mats Fall to Rival St. Mary's-Stockton in NorCal Final

By Spencer Silva



Sabrina Ionescu Photo Gint Federas

After a battle through the CIF Open Division, Miramonte's season came to an end in the Regional finals. The Mats (30-3) fell to the St. Mary's Rams (33-1) 67-58 on March 21 at the Sleep Train Arena.

Despite the loss, Miramonte head coach Kelly Sopak was proud of the work his team had put in throughout the long season. "We put a lot of work from November to where we're at today, the schedule we put together, and the level of competition we played. We just got better as the season went along," Sopak said.

The Mats got off to a slow start, adjusting to the full-court press employed by St. Mary's. The Rams doubled, and often triple-teamed, Miramonte guard Sabrina Ionescu. In the words of St. Mary's coach Tom Gonsalves, "We tried to limit her touches and make someone else beat us."

The Rams came out firing early, jumping out to a 44-29 lead at the half on the back of eight three-pointers. The Mats then went on an 8-0 run to begin the second half, only for St. Mary's to counter back with a 14-0 run of their own.

"They have a lot of firepower and they just keep coming at you," said Miramonte coach Kelly Sopak.

It was the second time in as many seasons the Mats faced the Rams in the postseason. In the first round of the 2014 tournament, they beat them by

a 15-point margin.

"(St. Mary's) has always been our rival," said Miramonte standout Sabrina Ionescu. "We knew what we were getting into and they knew what they were getting into."

Keana Delos Sanots led all scorers with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Forward Uriah Howard and Ionescu both chipped in 11 points and 12 rebounds.

The Mats will return all of their starters in 2016 and believe the experience of playing on the big stage will serve them well for next season.

"The new people grow from the experience and learn how competitive it is, how every opportunity we have, we have to grow from and learn from it," Ionescu explained. "I think it's going to help us next year."

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA