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Miramonte and Acalanes Postseason Ends in State Finals

By Karl Buscheck



Rachel Louie

It's been a banner year for Lamorinda girls' high school hoops. Miramonte rolled through the early rounds of the Open Division State Championship, while Acalanes advanced to the semifinals of the Division III tournament.

The Mats began the team's run by edging Pinewood 57-52 in an overtime home win on March 13. Sophomore forward Rachele Louie starred for Miramonte, scoring 16 points to help the Mats hold off a furious late charge.

In the semifinals, Miramonte topped St. Ignatius 67-55 on March 17. The Mats led wire-to-wire, but it was an eight-point run to start the final quarter that sealed the win.

"The first three minutes of the fourth quarter, that's the difference between whether someone's going to come and play with you or whether they might just go away," said head coach Kelly Sopak. "So, that's been an emphasis all year. It was great to see us actually do it."

Sabrina Ionescu had a characteristically big night, as the junior guard racked up 26 points and 14 rebounds while playing every minute. As Sopak explained, the entire team just has a knack for coming through when it matters most. "For a young group, they step up in the big games," he said.

Acalanes also stepped up in a big way during the 2014-2015 season. A year removed from an 11-15 finish, the squad reached the semifinals in the Division III State Championship.

"It was definitely a huge accomplishment for us," said head coach Chad Wellon. "The girls bought into the program and having that year of experience under their belts was huge."

After earning a bye in the first round, the Dons took down Shasta 62-57 at home on March 14. A lot of the credit for that result goes to sophomore Brooke Panfili.

"She went nuts in the fourth quarter," said Wellon, after the guard scored 14 points in a row.

Panfili wasn't the only Don who provided major contributions throughout the postseason. Sophomore forward Emma Godfrey dominated the

boards, while junior guard Julia Lyons and sophomore forward Roni Marrone stood out as the defensive stars.

On March 17, Acalanes ran up against the No. 1 seed Vanden in a road clash, and lost 75-44. The defeat ended the Dons' season, but the team was able to put the loss in perspective.

"You're not guaranteed to get back to this position next year," said Wellon. "So, I just really

wanted them to enjoy the moment, which I think they all did."



Brooke Panfili Photos Gint Federas

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