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Acalanes Boys' Lacrosse Holding Down First in DFAL Standings

By Karl Buscheck



Adrian Jeffries was key for the Dons, scoring the go-ahead goal in their 7-6 win against Campo. Photos Gint Federas

Acalanes is occupying the DFAL driver's seat as the second half of the boys' lacrosse season rolls along.

The Dons (7-0 in league, 10-5 overall) maintained their grasp on the top spot in the standings by edging Campolindo 7-6 on April 14 and beating Las Lomas 17-7 on April 17.

The fast start to the season has the Dons thinking big. "Our first goal is always to win the DFAL and go undefeated if possible," said head coach Brent Ringwood. "It's worked out in the past."

Against the Cougars, Acalanes fell behind 2-0 in the first quarter, but the team managed to draw level by the half. After the rivals traded goals in the third, the Dons claimed a 7-5 advantage with 10 minutes left in the contest. Senior Adrian Jeffries was in the middle of nearly all of the Dons' attacks.

"Sometimes an individual player steps up and makes an amazing play," said Ringwood after Jeffries scored what proved to be the game-winning goal. "It was big. It was big for us."

Campolindo made things interesting at the end. In the final minutes, junior Austin Mello scored to make it 7-6, but then a last-second shot went just wide of the net.

"All you can ask for is a shot at the end, and that's what we had," said Campolindo head coach Mitchel Frey. "I think that's a game that can go either way. Acalanes, obviously, battled. All due respect to Acalanes. You know, great team, but we're a great

team as well. I think you saw that." The defeat against Acalanes marked the first loss of the league campaign for the Cougars, but Frey likes the way his squad is playing.

"The team feels very good moving forward. This is something we can definitely build on and there's a lot positive attitude around the program."

The Cougars have already circled May 8 on the calendar. That's the day that Campolindo will host Acalanes in the final game of the season.

"We'll get another shot at Acalanes and we're definitely looking forward to it," said Frey.

Miramonte is also feeling confident as the team embarks upon the second half of the season with a 3-3 record in league and a 6-5 mark overall.

"I've been seeing improvements

consistently each week," said head coach John Hofinga. "So, I have my hopes high that the second time through the league play that we'll have a couple more wins than the first time through."

As Hofinga explained, the key for the second half is simple: score more goals.

"We're focusing more on our offense than our defense. So, we're working more on really finishing our shots and kind of valuing the ball and not turning it over very much."

While it will be difficult to make a run at the DFAL title, the future is looking bright for the Mats.

"I was thinking this was the first step to longer term success, but that we also have the necessary personnel this year to still win some games and have a good season."



From left: Austin Mello, Vinny Gladden and Shea Danforth

Lamorinda Girls Lacrosse Teams Finding Success

By Spencer Silva

All three Lamorinda teams sit in the top four spots of the DFAL girls' lacrosse standings. Acalanes (7-5, 6-0 DFAL) is currently in first place while Miramonte (5-6 overall, 5-2 DFAL) is in second place and Campolindo is fourth.

On April 14, Campo hosted defending NCS Division II Champion Acalanes. The Dons defeated the Cougars 18-13 in a hotly contested match and continue their undefeated streak in league play.

The match was in virtual gridlock for the first half. It was early in the second half, however, that the Dons went on a 7-1 run and pushed the score to 15-8, a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

The second half was punctuated by a strong performance from Dons' junior Sophia Ross. She scored six of her team-leading eight goals in the half. Seniors Caroline Newman and Ellie Higgins were also key factors. Newman scored four first-half goals and Higgins added four goals of her own.

The Cougars also had an encouraging second-half Tuesday. Senior Mary Hildeburn and sophomore Rebecca Hull starred. Hildeburn scored all four of her goals in the second half. Hull, who was Campo's player of the game, scored four goals too, along with a number of key assists.

Acalanes assistant coach Laura Harris credited the second-half surge to the team's strong mental and emotional makeup. "The girls were able to become very focused on the common goal. Not just to win but how they were going to play as a unit."

Harris said the team is not focused on NCS now. "If we worry about NCS right now, it may take

some of the fun away, and that's the last thing we want to do," Harris explained. The Dons will likely head into NCS a strong favorite.

Overall, the Campo's girls' lacrosse program is on the up-and-up. They're young and already have more wins in 2015 than they did in all of 2014. The Cougars were down three starters and didn't make a single substitution Tuesday, and were quite proud to give the Dons team a fight.

"It was a great game. There's nothing to be bummed about," explained Coach Jessica Hoffschneider cheerfully. "Tonight we rose to the level of the other team."

The Miramonte Mats challenged themselves with a tough preseason schedule, playing local powerhouses like Monte Vista, San Ramon Valley and Carondelet. They lost all three games, although it was a clerical error that sealed their fate against Monte Vista — the Mats' junior varsity team ended up playing Monte Vista's varsity for the first half.

"Anyone who watched our 16-8 loss against SRV can attest to the fact that we look like a brand new team," said head coach Devon Combe. "I have all the confidence in the world in this team's ability to be an incredibly fierce competitor come playoffs!"

The tough schedule appears to be paying dividends. The team is 5-2 in DFAL play and Combe sees a profound "commitment and intensity" from her girls on a day-to-day basis. Standouts Caroline Tague and Lauren Ramirez lead the team — although it's an impressive group of freshman will form the core of a team that should be strong for years to come.

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