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Girls Volleyball: No Clear Favorite in Wide Open DFAL

By Emily Dugdale



Campolindo's Kirsten Sibley (No.10) takes a shot while Acalanes' Mimi White (No. 10) and Reilly Webster (No.12) defend the net

Photos Gint Federas



Parker Jones



Caroline Shafer

The 2015 girls volleyball season is in full swing, and Campolindo, Acalanes and Miramonte find themselves in the thick of what's shaping up to be a wide open battle for the DFAL crown. As of this past weekend, the Cougars (6-7, 3-0 DFAL) sit atop the standings, with Acalanes (5-4, 2-1 DFAL) in third and Miramonte (9-5, 1-1 DFAL) is in fifth.

Unlike previous years, virtually every team is in it. "It's a small league, but it's very competitive this season – the teams that haven't been the strongest are now competitors," Miramonte head coach Lisa Bachtold said.

After going to the finals of last year's NCS Division III tournament and winning four consecutive DFAL titles, the Cougars have a reputation to uphold.

They return a lineup full of new faces along with veteran standouts like Emma

Johnson and Kirsten Sibley. "We have a lot of kids who didn't have opportunities to play last year, and now it's their time," head coach John Vuong said.

With one of the toughest schedules in Cougar history, the road back to the NCS championship will be treacherous. "They have a lot of talent, and I want to see how far they can take us," he said.

Acalanes is back with one of the most experienced teams in the league, with eight seniors and 11 returning players from last year's NCS semifinalist. Standouts include junior outside hitter Parker Jones and a trio of seniors in setter Grace Bolen, middle Mimi White, and outside hitter Maddie Graham.

"Our goal is to compete for a league title, and build on our second place finish from a season ago," head coach Todd Travis said.

Travis echoes his fellow coaches in saying that the league has improved greatly from last season. "Anyone can get beat on any given night, so we need to be prepared each match," he said.

Miramonte boasts a veteran lineup which includes junior phenom Caroline Shafer. Shafer was a DFAL first team selection last season and, according to Bachtold, she is "definitely one to watch." Fresh off their first tournament win at the Concord Varsity Invitational on Sept. 26, the Dons are firing on all cylinders entering league play.

"Many of our girls have gotten bigger, stronger and better, so now it's just building on the success of last year with those key players," Bachtold said. "The team's togetherness comes from twin senior captains, Emily and Elizabeth Fabian, "the epitome of leadership."

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