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Miramonte Defeats Campo in NCS Final Rematch

By Spencer Silva



Christian Schillinger Photo Gint Federas

rivalry; this year we were more even keel," said

Mats head coach James Lathrop. "The boys had a good, concerted defensive effort."

Early in the fourth quarter, two spectacular goals from senior Christian Schillinger shifted the tide in favor of the Mats. The first was a lob from the perimeter over Campolindo goalkeeper Nikhil Suri, which provoked Miramonte parent, Jack Hallahan, to exclaim, "That's the game!" He added, "I don't know Schillinger's first name, but it's 'God' right now." On the second goal, Schillinger came over the top for a near side finish, which staked the Mats to a 9-5 lead they wouldn't lose.

The Mats appear to be reaching peak form after scheduling a tough preseason slate, which included two matches against Harvard-Westlake Academy (Los Angeles, Calif.), one of the nation's premier teams. The Wolverines won both times.

Overall, the team is reliant on leadership from a strong senior class. Last fall, junior Tyler Abramson and senior Alex Zamanian earned first and second team all-league honors, respectively. According to Lathrop, the team needs contributions from up and down the roster to make a run at another NCS title.

The Cougars (10-6 overall, 2-1 DFAL) are off to yet another strong start, although some new faces have made their way into prominent roles. Freshman Beck Jurasius is the team's starting two-meter player, and while young, he's slowly turning into a force to be reckoned with near the cage. Seniors Cole Stevens and Yurii Hanley, who earned first and second team all league honors in 2014, are staples once again for the Cougars.

Price saw a fine effort from his team against the Mats. "Effort had nothing to do with (the loss)," he explained. "We've just got to keep getting better."

The team will participate in the upcoming North-South Tournament at Sacred Heart in Atherton, where there will some of the better teams the Bay Area has to offer. There Price's team will have an opportunity to polish up its game before entering what is shaping up to be a competitive final sprint.

Both teams boast talent out of the pool as well. Mats senior Jack Niehaus recently returned from New York City screening his short documentary, "Of Bears and Men," at the All American High School Film Festival. It was a finalist in four different categories. Campolindo's Nikhil Suri, who plays French horn, was recently given a chair on San Francisco's Symphony's Youth Orchestra. Suri is also receiving interest from Ivy League schools for playing water polo.

In most seasons, the influx and efflux of talent from local water polo programs leave clear favorites. This season, however, it is anyone's guess which team will top the season-end DFAL standings.

"This is the deepest I've ever seen the DFAL," said Campolindo head coach Miles Price. "Anyone could win it this year."

For now, Miramonte (8-6 overall, 2-0 DFAL) is the de facto frontrunner, after defeating rival Campolindo 9-7 at home last Wednesday, Oct. 14. It was the first time the two teams met since last fall, when Miramonte knocked off No. 1 seed Campo 10-8 in the NCS final - they met in the finals the year before, too; the Cougars won 11-10.

The two teams traded blows early, but the Mats dominated the second half.

"Last year, we got a little caught up in the

The Acalanes Dons (9-7 overall, 1-2 DFAL) are having an up-and-down season so far, showing flashes of brilliance and disappointment. They beat rival Campolindo twice in the preseason, for instance, but then suffered an 11-6 loss to the Cougars a week after blowing out Dougherty Valley by a margin of 21 goals.

"Good team defense fueled our solid early season results," said coach Clarke Tamiriki in an email. "We have had trouble maintaining that defense which has led to a lack of focus of late."

A strong senior group that includes Tommy Fellner and Jack Winther, who both earned second team all-league honors in 2014, and Evan Wentzel headline the roster.

Like their peers, the Dons prepared for the grueling DFAL schedule with a tough slate of preseason matches against some of California's top teams. However, in order to be successful, they're going to have to recreate some of their early season mojo.

"We have not played our best water polo in the last couple of weeks and need to regain the focus that we had early season," Tamiriki said. "When we are playing to our strength, I feel we stack up well (against other DFAL teams)."

Lady Mats Turn Tide on Cougars, Win 11-4

The Miramonte Lady Mats (9-4 overall, 3-0 DFAL) also won their rivalry match against Campolindo (9-7 overall, 1-2 DFAL). Unlike the boys, who have been evenly matched in recent years, the 11-4 victory marked the first time the Lady Mats beat the Cougars in nine seasons. The 'Super Sophomores,' which includes two-meter specialist Grace Tehaney, Carson Broad, Katrina Drake, Kelly Murphy and Skylar Savar, has been the foundation of the team's success this fall. Senior goalkeeper Paige Miller, who recorded eight saves against Campo, leads the team's superior defense. "We can focus on defense because we have so many great athletes on this team," head coach Noel Murphy explained. "Scoring just happens." The girls were runners up at the Western States Tournament in Modesto this past weekend and face off against co-DFAL leader and rival Acalanes on Wednesday Oct. 21.



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