

Published October 4th, 2017

Strong start for Lamorinda girls volleyball

By Jon Kingdon



Meaghan Hohman (9) Photos Gint Federas

Having lost a number of key offensive players from last season due to graduation, Miramonte coach Lisa Bachtold was approaching this season with cautious optimism having to rely on a number of unproven underclassmen. With seven new players on the varsity, there were several opportunities for people to step into starting positions.

With a 9-4 overall record, the Matadors volleyball team has shown that Bachtold's concern may have been overstated.

Junior Meaghan Hohman, a left hander, has become a genuine force on the front line, having several kills each game. Lauren Lim, having returned as the team's libero, has taken her game to the next level. According to Bachtold, "Lauren has shown constant improvement. She has taken on more responsibility on the team's defense and is relentless in the back row." Grace Guidotti, a junior but a first year member of the team has proven to be a very effective as the team's setter.

With a number of underclassmen playing a great deal, this certainly bodes well for the future of the team and

Bachtold's optimism is far less cautious now: "We have a lot of work ahead of us and we are still improving. The girls work hard in practice and have shown a lot of dedication and commitment. We are coming together as a team."

Campolindo Coach John Vuong also had some concern after last season having lost six starters to graduation. With a 12-4 record, it's clear that the Cougars have effectively reloaded.

The players that have taken over the key roles on the team are Junior Elizabeth Canon who plays middle and Senior Paige Johnson, the team's outside hitter.

Like all coaches, Vuong still feels there is room for improvement: "We need to improve our defense. We are a little bit undersized and I would like to see more effort to read from our back row."

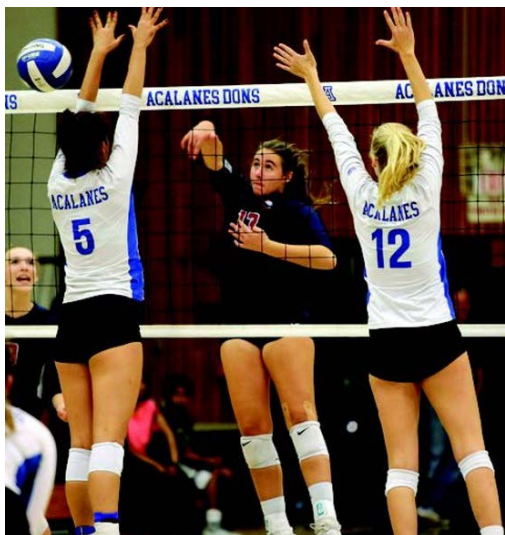
Still Vuong is most pleased with the play of sophomore setter, Audrey Pak: "She has taken control of the game. She displays a great deal of leadership and though only a sophomore, has the respect of all of her teammates."

Vuong simplifies the long-term prospects for his team: "We just have to prepare. We are facing a lot of competition but things are going according to plan and we're on the right path toward the post season and the championship."

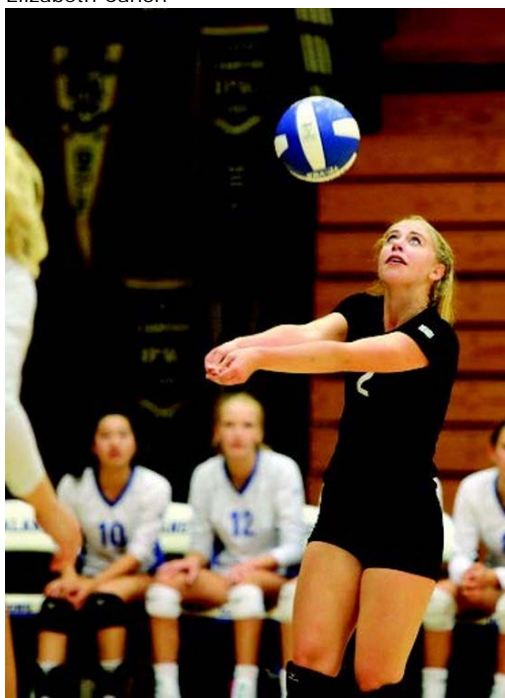
Coming off their championship season, the Acalanes girls were well aware that the bullseye was going to be on their back. They knew that they were going to get the best effort from their opponents as everyone wants to beat the current champions.

The Dons have started off the season with a 3-5 record and 1-1 in league play.

Because of their success last season, the team was invited to play in the Nike Tournament of Champions Tournament in Phoenix, Arizona Sept. 28-30. They will be competing against 74 other teams who will be arriving from all over the country. The experience should prove to be beneficial and at the same time, telling as to where the Dons are headed as the season progresses.



Elizabeth Canon



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