

A soggy but strong open to Lamorinda baseball season



Michael Cruz

By Jon Kingdon

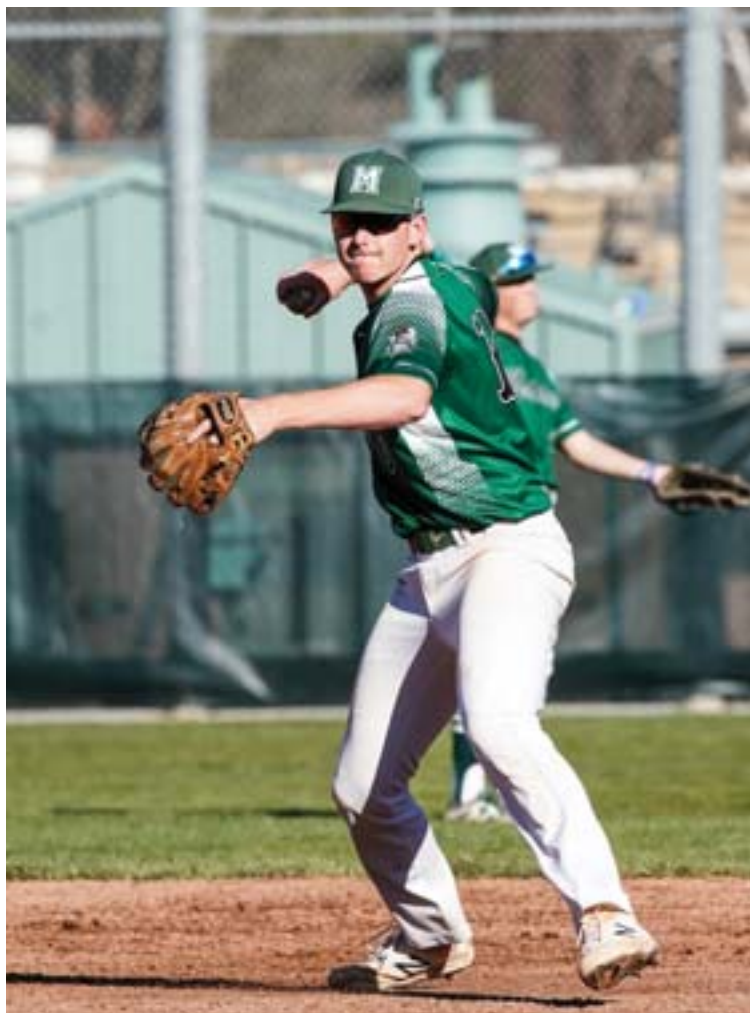
All three of the Lamorinda High Schools made the playoffs last season and all have demonstrated the potential to reach the playoffs again this year.

Campolindo
It has become an annual concern for the Campolindo baseball team to be able to get a sufficient amount of practice in due to the seasonal rain, according to head coach Max Luckhurst: "It happens every year. Our field is so marshy that when it rains, it really gets saturated. It's still not playable and you can't even walk across the grass. Since Jan. 28, we've been able to have only one organized practice."

Campolindo won't be playing their first home game until March 26 because they have been forced to play their scheduled home games on the road due to the unplayable conditions of their field.

After making it to the North Coast Section finals last season, Luckhurst is not one to allow himself or his team to feel sorry for themselves: "No one is going to feel bad for us. We've got a lot of good guys this year and we'll figure it out. Still we're looking forward to the weather allowing us to practice and work."

Where does Luckhurst see the strength of his team? "I wish I had an answer for you. We do have a great work ethic and know-how to face adversity has made us stronger and



Joe Hollerbach

Photos Gint Federas

has helped pull the team together. It makes life interesting to have to just go out and play games."

Luckhurst does not name captains but it does help that Campolindo has 12 returners and "all of my returners are leaders by example."

The two leading starting pitchers are Michael Cruz, a three-year starter who has been the ace of the staff the last two years and he is ably backed up by Donovan Robles.

This is a team with good overall speed headed by Ryan O'Neal, the team's leadoff man, says Luckhurst: "Ryan is our quickest player but we have quite a bit of team speed."

The defense is led by outfielder Lucas Allen but there

are a lot of changes overall from last year's team. The infield is all new from last year and there are only two returning starters who played the same position last season.

Last season Campolindo won six of their last seven games and Luckhurst is looking for a similar type of season this year: "Our goal is to play our best ball at the end of the year. We're taking the whole season to get ready. Hopefully after 24 games, we'll have figured it out."

Luckhurst has a very philosophical attitude to the game: "The key for our team to be successful is to limit our mistakes and capitalize on opportunities. The best team does not always win. You have to have some luck on

your side. I want our players to compete every day and if they can do that, they can look in the mirror and have no regrets. If that happens, good things will happen."

Acalanes
Acalanes' first year head coach Clint Hoover has started off the season with seven straight victories: "Our players know they can compete and not be intimidated by anyone. We play our game and try to get better and better. Our ultimate goal is to win the NCS tournament and the start of the season has given us a lot of confidence."

There is only one senior on the team, Scott Bryan, with a number of juniors and sophomores making up the bulk of the roster. It's still a maturing team, says Hoover: "Some of our players had varsity time last year so we do have some experience and the team is developing every day."

The Dons have a lot of depth with their pitching staff led by Nick Kresnak and Logan Hurd. Says Hoover: "Eddie Burns has good stuff, Michael Castelli does a good job and Andrew Peterson, a lefty, is good out of the pen."

There is a solid defense backing up the pitching. The outfield has good speed and range. Nick Bamont is in center and is flanked by Scott Brydon in right and Sam Heyman in left, though each has the skills to play center.

The team's offense is led by Kresnak - who plays third when not pitching - Tommy Thrasher, Davis Diaz and Thatcher Hurd. Hoover appreciates the depth he has here: "We've been improving our batting each game and there are a lot of players that can really step up."

It's the little things that are key for Hoover: "To be ultimately successful, we need to be consistent, staying hungry, keep improving and have everyone know their role."

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Saint Mary's defeats No. 1 Gonzaga to earn spot in NCAA Tournament



Photo Tod Fierner

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Bennett appreciated how special the weekend was: "It was one of the best four days

of my life. Seeing my kids and their friends win the state championship and then defeating San Diego and Gonzaga, it's been an unbelievable

high." This was the first time that Saint Mary's has defeated a No.1 ranked team in the nation after losing 10 previous

times, going back to 1955 (Gonzaga-3, Arizona-1, San Francisco-6).

Center Jordan Hunter, who was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player, scoring 12 points and grabbing 15 rebounds versus Gonzaga, claimed after the game that the victory was never in doubt: "We knew going into the game that we were going to win it."

Saint Mary's game plan was to avoid getting into a running game versus Gonzaga. Guard Jordan Ford who was named to the All-Tournament team led the Gaels with 17 points and controlled the tempo of the game: "I made sure that I did a better job at slowing down the pace to make sure we could get the best shot we could get." Saint Mary's outshot Gonzaga 45 percent to 37 percent and out-rebounded them 34 to 27.

Bennett spoke glowingly of his team after the game: "I

am beyond proud of our guys. The let us coach them hard and we kept getting better and better. The win is up there at the top for me and there is a lot of satisfaction that comes with winning the tournament."

Saint Mary's, seeded 11th, will be playing the sixth-seeded and defending national champion Villanova Wildcats on March 21 in Hartford, Connecticut. Playing Villanova brings to mind the Gaels' win over second-seeded Villanova in 2010, on the way to the Gaels first-ever Sweet 16 appearance. In that game, the Gaels were led by Omar Samhan, Mickey McConnell and Matthew Dellavedova, all of whom are still playing professional basketball. Bennett remembers that game and welcomes the challenge: "It's a good test but we've very confident. I'm excited and looking forward to it."

2018-2019 Boys DAL All League, Winter Sports

DAL results for girls will be published in an upcoming edition

DAL All-League – Foothill Division Boys Basketball – 2018-19

2nd Team All-League
Jayson Fernbacher
Niyi Olabode

Miramonte
Miramonte

Co-Most Valuable Offensive Player
Jose Carra Hernandez Campolindo

Nathan Links
Nick Geannacopulos
Simon Newirth-Stein

Campolindo
Acalanes
Miramonte



David Ahazie



Matt Meredith

Honorable Mention
Ian Archer Acalanes
Matt Radell Campolindo

DAL All-League Boys Soccer – 2018-19



Jose Carra Hernandez



Travis Stevenson

Most Valuable Defensive Player



Kent Barbir



Kelly Clancy

1st Team All-League
Connor Gregg Campolindo
Kellen Clancy Campolindo
Travis Stevenson Acalanes
Kent Barbir Miramonte

Honorable Mention
Erik Voss Acalanes
Bernard Adri Acalanes
Kyle Parnell Acalanes
Riley Breul Campolindo
Vivek Lashkari Campolindo
Keoni Smith Vuong Campolindo
Conor Roemer Miramonte
Luca Argast Miramonte
Eric Heilmann Miramonte

DAL All-League Boys Wrestling – 2018-19

1st Team All-League
160 Steven Williams Acalanes

2nd Team All-League
113 Noah Hamann Campolindo
220 Cesar Correa Acalanes

Honorable Mention
170 Jack Gruen Campolindo

2nd Team All-League

Most Valuable Player
David Ahazie Campolindo

1st Team All-League
Matt Meredith Miramonte
Carter Mahaney Campolindo
Aidan Mahaney Campolindo