

Published May 1st, 2019

Lamorinda boys tennis teams land on top

By Jon Kingdon



Photos Gint Federas

we had," said McCollom. With the weather causing postponements and rescheduling, Miramonte was forced to close the season with six matches in eight days.

Besides the weather, McCollom had to respond to the loss of what he had anticipated being his top two returning players: "Micah Ellis chose to be home schooled which enabled him to play in national tournaments and Liam Dodd was accepted into West Point and has gone into full training and chose not to play tennis."

After seven weeks, Miramonte was confronted with an out of character 3-4 record. McCollom realized that the team was going to need a lot of players to mature quickly and step up and become forces in single play. Mature they did as the Matadors just finished their regular season with eight consecutive victories finishing with an 11-4 record.

Having three freshmen, Clemens Van Dongen, Nishad Elias, Liam Sullivan and sophomores Nicholas Hwang and Peter Reeves playing singles, the hoped for maturity arrived sooner than anyone could have expected as Miramonte went on to win their next seven matches. "It's been a hybrid season," said McCollom. "We are very balanced with the seniors, juniors, sophomores and freshman. It's rare to get this. The freshmen are great kids. They are very mature, well liked and accomplished in the tennis community, commanding a lot of respect."

Two seniors, Dominic Davidson and Alan Zhou, have been very effective doubles players, Davidson teaming with freshman Peter Aroner as the number one doubles team and Zhou playing with sophomore Ethan Arroyo. "Dominic is a pure leader on and off the court and has been my most solid doubles player the last three years," says McCollom. "Zhou in his first year on the varsity is the most fun human being and brings a wonderful esprit de corps to the team."

Doubles has always been important to McCollom and the Matadors: "We pride ourselves on our doubles teams. We emphasize it and other coaches have been following our lead."

With an 80-38 record in all matches, it's a team that is in great position for the NCS playoffs.

Campolindo

Campolindo also began the season getting their sea legs, losing five of their first seven matches. Despite confronting various injuries and illnesses, head coach James Scott never lost his confidence in his team: "I am really impressed how much the team really competes in every match. They just play hard and have come to rise up to the matches. We've really come together as a team."

This would more than explain how the Cougars went on to win nine of their next 11 matches

The singles players have been led by seniors Cal Hunter, Nick Bohm, Eden Yu and junior Benjamin Goldblatt. "These kids are super young men," says Scott. "They have put in a lot of good work and are outstanding people."

The doubles teams for Campolindo have been a real factor in the team's success this season, says Scott: "Our doubles teams are playing well and that was a welcome surprise this season. The players have really bought into playing doubles. I have been really impressed with Josh Fleming who knew it was best for the

As the boys tennis season has just concluded, once again Miramonte, Campolindo and Acalanes have been key factors in the Foothill League. Miramonte and Campolindo finished tied for first in league play with 8-2 records. Acalanes came in fourth with a 5-5 record, one game behind College Park. It's been a dog eat dog eat dog relationship for the Lamorinda schools. In the six matches between the schools, five of them were decided by 5-4 scores.

Miramonte

As the head coach of the Miramonte girls and boys tennis teams, Michael McCollom has been confronted with the whims of Mother Nature. It was the smoke from the fires for the girls and the rain for the boys that forced the team to constantly adjust to the constantly changing conditions. "I can't remember the last normal practice

team to play doubles and he really bought in to it and has really learned how to do it well. We're not relying on our singles or doubles player to win. We just rely on everyone to pull together."

Two sophomores, Noam Ayalon and Cooper Schnurr have not been intimidated by their first year playing for the varsity, says Scott: "They have been wonderful as starters and made large progress this year."

Scott says his captains Hunter, Yu and Bohm have done a great job for him in their roles: "They been great seeing it as a year-round job. They got the guys to hit in the off-season, scheduling lots of things and bringing the team together as one unit.

Acalanes

Like Campolindo and Miramonte, Acalanes was slow out of the gate, losing their first four matches. And like their neighboring schools, the Dons turned the season around winning seven of their last 12 matches. Head coach Curtis Berrien, who was promoted after serving two years as the school's JV coach, spoke of the team's improvement as the season progressed: "The rain set us back but it did so for everyone. The whole team has improved steadily and it's been great. They practice 4-5 days a week and at the end of the season we were playing our best tennis."

This has been a veteran team with four of the six singles players being seniors and only one freshman and two sophomores on the roster. Finishing fourth in the Foothill League with a 5-5 record, one game behind third place College Park, the Acalanes record in league play shows how close victory and defeat can be, losing four of their league matches by a score of 5-4.

The leaders on the team have been seniors Ryan Everly, Colin Brightbell and Ed Collinson. Each of them has brought their own unique quality to the team, says Berrien: "Ryan always gets there early and leads by example. Ed has been a vocal leader and Cole is the outspoken leader that gets the team going. All our four-year varsity guys have shown great spirit and are always ready to do."

The pleasant surprise for the team has been junior Kaisei Huari-Oyama who is from France and is attending Acalanes this year. He has brought a unique flavor to the squad that Berrien appreciates: "Kaisei has lived in several countries and brings a European flair to squad like warming up wearing a jeans jacket. He has handled the game pressure well and is not afraid to hit the ball hard. He does not like to lose but is not afraid of it."

Berrien's aim for the team all season has been simple: "We're playing a lot of tennis. The key for the team has been to just keep having fun and playing hard."



Photos Gint Federas

Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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