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Short but sweet seasons for the Lamorinda golf teams

By Jon Kingdon



Miramonte girls golf team Photo provided

Golf, like all other sports, had to make their concessions and adjustments due to the coronavirus. This year, the girls and boys shared the spring season. It was more of an adjustment for the girls, according to Miramonte's girls head coach John Keady. "The weather was colder than what they were used to," Keady said. "They normally compete in the fall when the weather is ideal, so we had to make sure that the girls dressed warmly for their matches. Regardless, there was a lot of laughter and the girls were happy to be out there."

Though competing in the spring, it was not the normal season for the boys either. "Everything was just so condensed," said Jack Schramm, the Miramonte boys head coach. "In February, we were given a week's notice to get ready for the season, so we did not have a lot of time to plan things out. With a six-match season (3-3), we did not get to play non-league matches or compete in

any tournaments."

Scheduling was another issue that had to be addressed. It wasn't easy, said Campolindo's boys and girls head coach Gary O'Neill. "Even with the virus, the public was still playing a lot of golf," O'Neill said. "The good news was that Moraga Country Club, Orinda Country Club, and Rossmoor found a way to make it work so we were able to play matches thanks to the management of those entities."

Acalanes' boys and girls head coach Tim Scott welcomed the joint seasons: "It was different, but it was a lot of fun with the interaction between the boys and the girls."

Even though Campolindo lost four players who opted to play football, the team had the depth to go undefeated. "I thought that was a smart choice by those who chose to play football," O'Neill said. "They will be able to play golf for the rest of their lives, but football is a short-lived opportunity."

The Cougars were led by three senior co-captains: Baron Szeto, who will be playing for Cal Poly SLO next year, John Lagomarsino, and Austin Walker. "All three were capable of putting up good scores. John battled injuries but still had a marvelous season."

There is a solid core of sophomores, Justin Rodriguez, Barrett Dellamar, Dylan Breznikar and Ben Marsen who will be providing a strong foundation for next year's team. The team also benefited by the changes in schedules which allowed Andy Moon (baseball) and Grayer Leenhouts (lacrosse) to play for the team this season.

Miramonte had a young team, finishing with a 3-3 record this season, losing two close matches to Campolindo. The team was led by senior Reilly Sockwell and junior Nathan Rigsby who both played 1 and 2 through the season and Marcus Erickson who was No. 3.

There is a solid foundation for next year according to Schramm. "We only had one senior on the team, and we will have a lot of good golfers coming back next year," Schramm said. "Bowen Sande is a freshman and was in our top six and will be playing in the final league tournament. The tournament will give us the opportunity to avenge our losses to Campolindo."

The joint seasons were not an issue for Schramm. "We would play both of our home matches on the same day with the boys playing first and the girls going off after us," Schramm said. "It also helped that there were no rain days."

Acalanes had a solid core of five players led by Tucker Gannon and Andrew Cusumano. Sam Higgins also came on late due to other sports.

The Dons were fortunate to have additional help from Tucker's father, Dave Gannon, who runs the East Bay School of Golf in Lafayette. "Dave was a real help to us by allowing our players to practice at his facility," Scott said.

Scott was impressed with the power of his players but just felt the need for his and most other young golfers to work on their short games. "These kids all hit the ball so far and they all did a good job in keeping the ball in play," said Scott. "If I had one recommendation for all young golfers, it would be to really work on their chipping and putting more than just hitting their drivers on the range."

Numbers became an issue for some of the girls' teams. Even with a good core of golfers, Acalanes did not have enough players to be competitive. There were only four girls on the team when the Dons would normally have 12 to 14 girls, but several of them chose to do other things.

"All four of the girls were good players," said Scott. "Our top players were juniors Kendal Geddes and Makena Chelemedos. Both are very similar with their competitiveness. Our two seniors were Libby Ross and Carly Arends, who were also solid players."

O'Neill had similar number issues at Campolindo: "We had a small squad due to medical issues and other concerns. Often, we were hard pressed to have enough players for a match," O'Neill said. "On the bright side, we finished 3-3 and the girls that were available showed improvement and did well by our standards."

The team was led by Murphy and Woodford Ainsley, Alisa Lewis-Smith, and Anna Mooradian. "Murphy was consistently our best player," said O'Neill. "Woodford really came on and played well. Alissa and Anna both were solid. Woodford was our only senior and we're excited that we will have a talented group of girls returning next season."

John Keady is in his first year as the head coach for the Miramonte girls' team which was comprised of three seniors, six juniors, two sophomores and two freshmen. He acknowledged Bob Rydell who he replaced and "who left me a very talented team and has been very helpful to me."

Junior Kaylen Tu, the league's MVP last year has not lost a step this year. Sophomore Courtney Scheingart has been Keady's number two. "Kaylen is very strong mentally with great course management," Keady said. "She has great focus, concentration and a very repeatable swing with many elements to being a good golfer."

Under these trying conditions, the three senior co-captains - Hannah Klein, Lucy Marken and Heather Shinn - have been a great help for Keady. "They were very proactive when we learned that the season was going to start. They made it easy for the coaches, parents, and players to communicate. They made my job much easier because they were so open and eager to play."

After 33 years of coaching, this will also be Tim Scott's final match as he has opted to retire this year.

Gary O'Neill is one of many that will miss Scott: "Tim is just one of the all-time sweethearts with his longtime service to high school golf. It's hard to picture a nicer individual. We're really going to miss him."

With so many memories, it was the joy that his players brought to the game that was really special to Scott: "I'll miss the enthusiasm these kids have for this wonderful game we call golf. They're going to get to enjoy this game throughout their lives and that just tickles me. It's been a great 33 years. I'm really going to miss it."

On April 19, the boys and girls teams from Acalanes, Campolindo, Miramonte, Las Lomas and Northgate will have a final tournament at the Orinda Country Club in lieu of any kind of county or state tournaments.

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