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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Lamorinda girls volleyball preview



Photo provided

From left: Jade Profilio, Georgia Winkles, Hanna Hageboeck, Apple Walton, Emma Johnson, Gianna Manzone, Isabela Yanakieva and Aly Kirke

By Jon Kingdon

Like all the other fall sports, the girls volleyball teams were forced to make some adjustments, though far fewer than under the spring protocols. "There were no major changes in our preparation," said Acalanes head coach Haley Walsh. "We are making changes quicker than if we had the normal time to prepare for the season in adjusting hitters and changing positions. It is a little weird with the quick turnaround to go from one season right into another without having that long off-season in between."

The short off-season could have been more of a problem for Miramonte's head coach Leslie Ray, if she did not have such a mature team: "With only a month off after last season, there was a big adjustment in getting the underclassmen acclimated into our system. With six seniors and 11 juniors, there was a big group that already knew our system."

With a lot of new players on the Campolindo roster, the short off-season did not make it easy for head coach John Vuong: "Right now we're still learning. We have a lot of young players and new faces in the varsity program. They're good, skilled players but they're still learning to work as one, finding that connection among the players."

Acalanes

Despite a slow start to the season (0-3), Walsh, in her third year as the head coach of the Dons, has a team that has completely bought into her system. "It

does feel like they're a cohesive unit whereas it hadn't felt like that in the past," Walsh said. "We're doing things that we've talked about and we're seeing a lot of success. At this point, it's just tweaking some unforced errors."

This is a very mature team, with 14 juniors and seniors and one freshman, that Walsh feels was stronger for what they all went through last season. "Our seniors are leading the team and the program," Walsh said. "It feels that those things that we worked on last year in terms of facing adversity are showing in the growth of our whole team right now."

The offense has a lot of strength on the front line. Aly Kirke and Katelyn Olin have been very strong in the middle. Despite being under 5'9", Hanna Hageboeck "is a phenomenal hitter and is one of our key players," Walsh said.

As the season progresses, freshman MaeLin Mason, should be seeing a lot of playing time. "MaeLin is a great player and is just learning our system and once she learns it, she will be a valuable piece in our offense," Walsh said. "She has such an aggressive swing, it's just a matter of getting her timing on the set and once she gets it, she will have a monster attack."

The Dons are running a 5-1 offense, using only one setter, 5'1" Rachel Zhang who will play in the front row. "It's great that Rachel can do that and adjust to our new system as we wait for our second setter, Mara Korzeniowska to return from a concussion which will allow us to run a 6-2 (2 setters) offense."

Lyanne Wang was being counted on at the key libero position and as a defensive specialist but suffered a hand fracture in the second game and will be lost for an indefinite time. Senior Georgia Winkles will now be filling that role. Senior defensive specialist Kira Wood has been solid on defense and Emma Johnson has been a double threat, Walsh said: "Emma has made some big defensive plays along with being an offensive threat."

It's addressing the little things that need to be addressed for the team to be successful, according to Walsh: "We just need to see more fire from the players on the court and be more aggressive with our swings and passes. If we keep our foot on the gas, we'll start to see a lot of positive results."

Miramonte

With the preseason and an opening game victory over Berean Christian (3-0), Ray has come away with a positive perspective of the team. "These girls are relentless," Ray said. "They come into the gym and get the job done. Practices are game-like and with so many upperclassmen, they're all competing for positions and court time."

There is a lot of strength in the front line for Miramonte with outside hitters, junior Amber Chu, and senior Casey Roy. Junior Camryn Hirst who played JV last season and senior Natalie Kurtz are the starting middle blockers. "Amber and Casey will be big impact players on the outside and Natalie and Camryn will be strong players inside as well."

Junior Julia Berg, who has been on the team since she was a freshman, will be running the Miramonte offense. Senior, Catherine Devlin will be the second setter when the Matadors go to a 6-2 lineup and has the versatility to play different positions. "When we are playing a 5-1 offense, Catherine will have a huge impact on our defense," Ray said.

Nicole Tuszynski, who played as a freshman last season and junior Annika Blas-Cedeno are both competing to be the team's libero. Both can also fill the role as defense specialist.

It all seems to be coming together for Ray who came to Miramonte two years ago: "When I started here, we had a big freshman class, and they have all prepped during their club seasons and they're all ready to go. It's all about playing for each other as a family and as a team. We just need to stick to our goal which is to finish at the top of a very competitive league."

Campolindo

After a victory over California and a loss to top ranked Marin Catholic, the Cougars are still determining the charac-

ter of the team. "It's a matter of defining ourselves and determining who our players are going to be," Vuong said. "Our numbers were short this offseason because a number of the girls were focusing on beach volleyball."

It's the lack of competition early in the season that has handicapped the development of the team with Campolindo playing fewer pre-league games and tournaments than usual. "Normally we would play in a number of local tournaments but most of them have been canceled and we pulled out of a tournament in San Diego out of concern with the coronavirus," Vuong said. "The pandemic may have set back our team in their ability to communicate and play as a team. There has been some carryover from last year though we're starting to get back to some normalcy. It's knowing how to gel and play with each other. We don't have that yet but it's going to build as the season goes on. It's just a matter of when."

After graduating eight seniors last season, the team is comprised of six seniors, six juniors, two sophomores and two freshmen.

There is a lot of size on the team though it's a young group in the front line. Freshman Emma Knutson and sophomore Hannah Bjornson are the leading outside hitters and junior Brittany Soun will be a top player as a middle blocker. Freshman Aveya Stone is just returning from a hand injury and should play a substantial role as well.

Using a 6-2 scheme, the starting setters will be junior Olivia Woo who played for the JV last season and senior Ella Heydenfeldt. Senior Gracie Doane will also see time as a setter.

The defense will be led by junior libero, Olivia Wiseman who has been on the varsity since she was a freshman. The leading defenders will be Megan Mitchell and Samantha Brouhard. Front liner, Hannah Bjornson will also be counted on to play defense as well. This is a key area of concern for Vuong because "even though we have a lot of good hitters, if we don't defend the ball, we won't get to hit the ball."

With so many players on the varsity for the first time, Vuong is looking for leaders to step up and has named Grace Doane and Megan Mitchell as the team captains, though he will have individual captains for each game. "It's a challenge because we have a lot of young, dominant players," Vuong said. "We want the leaders to support the team on and off the court, which is what a true leader does, leading by example. It's on them to get the younger players to buy into what they're saying."

Saint Mary's men's soccer on the cusp of success

By Jon Kingdon

With a record of 40-4-3 over the last three seasons, the Saint Mary's soccer team has not lost a beat winning three of their first five games this season. With the players on last year's team not being credited with last year's abbrevi-

ated season (6-2-1), the current roster of 30 is larger than normal.

"It is a bigger number than we usually have and it's a little harder to manage," head coach Adam Cooper admitted. "We had a big class graduate in 2019 and we lost a lot of guys last year, so we brought in a lot of players the past two seasons which does bode well

for the future." In fact, there are 21 freshmen and sophomores on the Gaels' roster.

Though protocols are reduced now to wearing masks when indoors, the team was still handicapped by the restrictions caused by the virus in limiting their ability to fully evaluate the high school players that were on their re-

cruiting list. "We were not allowed to recruit off campus for over a year," Cooper said. "Our evaluations were based mostly on video though we knew some of them from recruiting before we were shut down and also relied on recommendations from people that we knew." ... continued on Page C2

Campolindo's Robbie Mascheroni named Boys Athlete of the Week

With 6 receptions for 202 yards and 3 touchdowns in Campolindo's 56-21 victory in Moreau Catholic high school in the first week of the football season, Robbie Mascheroni was named the Bay Area News Group Boys Athlete of the Week receiving 47.1% of the votes cast by the public.

- J. Kingdon

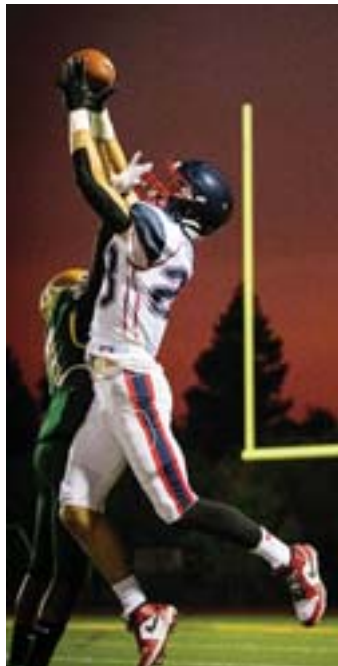


Photo Ty Sofman

Flitter tapped as head varsity girl's basketball coach at Campolindo

Submitted by Raymond Meadows

Coach Bill Flitter comes to Campolindo High School after spending the past season as the JV girl's basketball assistant coach. For the past 10 years, Flitter has been coaching and training youth players who have gone on to play Division I & II college basketball. His local community basketball program, Level Up, focuses on developing female athletes ages 8 to 18 through 1:1 and group training, competitive teams, and a popular 3v3 league. He is active in shaping youth basketball in the Lamorinda community as a board member of St. Perpetua CYO and a co-chair of LMYA basketball.

He spent three seasons as a head coach at De La Salle High School, leading the freshman Spartans to a 66-12 record.

"I'm extremely excited for the opportunity to be the girl's basketball coach at Campolindo High

School," Flitter said. "I will work tirelessly to provide our student-athletes with an experience of growth: academically, socially, and athletically. I'm looking forward to the process of building a program that is a source of pride for Campolindo and the community for years to come."

Flitter currently resides in Moraga with his wife, Chris, and their two children, Jack and Audrey.

