

Published June 8th, 2022

Individual and team success for Lamorinda at Meet of Champions

By Jon Kingdon



Acalanes' Carly Harriman Young clears the bar at 5'3" at the NCS Meet. Photo Jon Kingdon

For the first time in two years there was a North Coast Section Championship on May 21 and 22 at Dublin High School. The girls' track and field teams were led by Campolindo and Acalanes who finished in first and third respectively with Miramonte coming in 19th. Though the boys' teams were unable to crack the top 10, there were a number of individual performances worthy of recognition and showing great potential for the future.

There was a unanimous feeling among the head coaches about how much better this season was over the prior two abbreviated seasons. "I don't think that the sense of normalcy is all the way back," Campolindo head coach Chuck Woolridge said. "It's been nice to have a full-blown track season, but we still have had to be very careful and still we've had some of our kids that came down with COVID and that made a big impact on their season because they had to miss a lot of days. It's been wonderful to have full track practices instead of the pods and being able to be a team and that has been wonderful."

Miramonte's head coach Tristan Tool concurred that "it's better. It's much closer and recognizable as a track season unlike the last two seasons." When asked if things were better, Acalanes head coach Joe Escobar answered succinctly, "Absolutely."

With a balanced team, the Campolindo girls won the NCS for the first time in their history. "It's been a long time since Campolindo did not have to rely so heavily on the distance events," Woolridge said. "This was really a complete team this year which has been really exciting. It's been wonderful to watch our sprint and hurdle teams thrive. We've some really good success with the relays and we have to give credit to Coach Angela and Coach Greg Mahr who have done a wonderful job with our sprint, hurdle, jump group. Coach Gabe in the long jump and triple jump, Jackie the pole vault and in the throws, without a lot of experience we've seen a lot of improvement with our kids with Coach Jeff and they have all done a fantastic job."

Mari Testa won the 100-meter hurdles, the 100-meter race and was part of the 4 x 100 relay with Kyrstin Wilson, Meagan Kennedy, and Sara Tabibian. Tabibian also won on the 300-meter hurdles and placed third in the 400 meters race, with all of them qualifying to go to the state tournament. "With our core of outstanding sprinters, the rest of the team has fed off the excitement and performances that they have brought," Woolridge said. "Sara last participated in the state tournament in her freshman year, so she really knew what this tournament was about and what it takes and has been a real core for our team."

Testa would go on to finish eighth in the state meet in the 100-meter hurdles, the highest among the locals that went on to compete in that meet.

Ellie Buckley, Shea Volkmer and Angeni Lieben finished in fourth, eighth and 15th in the 3,200-meter run. Namratha Kasalanti finished in sixth with a career best of 36'1" in the triple jump. Pinkie Schnayer finished ninth in the shot put, contributing to the final point totals for the Cougars.

For the boys, Mason Fara finished second in the 400 meters, qualifying for state, and sixth in the 200 meters. The boys 4 x 100 meters finished in sixth with Kyle Fossen, Fara, Joshua Lee and Garrett Nelson and Alexander Lodewick finished in 10th in the 3,200 meters.

There was a bigger turnout for Campolindo (100) this year. "We had a lot of freshmen, sophomores and juniors that were participating for the first time," Woolridge said. "To be a smaller school and be in contention for that title is remarkable for our program."

Acalanes

Coming into the season, there were more questions than answers for the Acalanes Dons with a roster of 130. "There were no expectations coming this season," Escobar said. "We had 52 kids that weren't freshmen

that had never run track before and still the boys won their first league title in 10 years. (Sophomore) Mike Kuhner really grew since his freshman year and took over this year to the point where everyone on the team knew him by sight and respected him. To have someone big like him in charge of everything really helped us out."

Heading to the state tournament are Carly Harriman Young and Haley Chelemedos who finished second and third in the high jump and Kuhner who finished third in the 100 meters and Trevor Rogers also a third-place finisher in the long jump. Sisters Lauren (senior) and Megan (sophomore) finished in fifth and ninth in the 800 meters.

Escobar saw a lot this season to be proud of. "Our boys' team was successful due to the number of football players (around 20) that came out for our team," Escobar said.

The 4 x 100 relay for the boys of Ethan Torres, Paul Kuhner, Trevor Rogers, and Kyle Bielawski were the favorite to make it to the state tournament but lost out in the Tri-Valley tournament due to a fumbled exchange. It was particularly frustrating for the Dons because the eventual winner El Cerrito had lost twice to the Acalanes team earlier in the season. With no seniors on the relay team, there is much to look forward to.

The two sisters, senior Lauren Yee and her sister, sophomore Megan Yee both competed in the 800 meters, finishing in fifth and eighth respectively, in the same heat. "It was kind of cool for Lauren to go out with her sister in the same heat," Escobar said. "It was very impressive for Lauren, who competed in that race as a freshman and then missed the next two years due to the COVID virus and then come back and compete again."

"We had a terrific girl's high jump team," assistant coach David Kohls said. "They were all over 5 feet and three of them were over 5'2" (Harriman-Young, Chelemedos and Dulci Vail) making us the only high school in California with three that could jump that high and we're very proud about that. Trevor Rogers is an outstanding long jumper and is developing into a high jumper."

Miramonte

For Coach Tool, there were some outstanding individual performances and a feeling of real optimism on the team. "Because of the virus, we had a number of sophomores and juniors that we had not known about prior to this season because they did not participate the last two years," Tool said. "Sophomore Asher Patel has been our top runner. He is very raw and untapped. He was brand new to running and got hurt running cross country. He has still been battling some injuries and has had to do half of his running on an elliptical and is now one of the better sophomores in the state." Patel finished in sixth in the 1600 meters and 12th in the 3200 meters. Senior Roan Sandhu finished in eighth place in the boys' pole vault.

The girls' team was led by a freshman Victoria Chatter, who set school records this year and finished second in the 200 meters and will be competing in the state tournament. "Tori is fast, coachable and has been great to have on the team and should continue to improve," Tool said.

The strength of the team, the distance runners was a combination of seniors and underclassmen. "Our younger distance runners really showed up this year," Tool said. "It was good to see because we are graduating six of our top eight girls this year and it's been great to see the younger girls and boys coming through the pipe. Our seniors really passed the baton, taking it all seriously and showing the passion for running and showing the ropes to the younger athletes."

Tool did not want to overlook the career of senior Kate Riley. "Kate had a tough go this season, but she is a phenomenal 800 runner and was number one on our winning cross-country team," Tool said. "Kate got sick a couple of times and suffered a hip injury but will be running for American University next year."

Leading the boys team next year will be Patel, Ricky Davis, Jason Wagner. Besides Chatter, the Matadors will be counting on Zoey Schmidt and Grace Bell.

Tool is already looking forward to next year: "We had a smaller team than we were used to, but it is growing and it's a very positive environment and I'm optimistic for what is going to happen in the future."

Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA