

Success in the water for Lamorinda swimmers at NCS Meet



Photo provided

First-place 100-yard breaststroke winner Campolindo senior Theoden Yavuzer-Judd with coaches.

By Jon Kingdon

Led by the Campolindo girls' and boys' swim teams that finished first and sixth respectively, there was a number of success stories for the Acalanes girls (11th) and boys (33rd) and for the Miramonte girls (16th) and boys (23rd).

As with all of the sports this year, the swim teams appreciated the sense of normalcy that had been missing the past two years. "It was a great year for the kids," Miramonte head coach Trevor Rose said. "It took time to rebuild but it was great to get back to a little bit of normal."

Orinda Aquatics head coach Don Heidary was also glad to see a full season but did allow that it was not as difficult for the swimmers as it was for the other sports. "When we started back up in September, it was generally back to normal and it had been difficult for everyone," Heidary said. "The positive during the last two years for the kids was that we had been predominantly in the water, albeit with a limited number, which was a respite to a large degree for these kids, who like everyone, had gone through isolation and remote learning but we were able to get to the pool where they could see

their friends and train. Our seniors have been leaders and role models. Because of them, we were fortunate, more than most, to be able to continue through the pandemic."

For Campolindo, there were several first, second and third finishes. On the girl's side, the Cougars were led by sophomores Adriana Smith who finished first in the 100-yard backstroke and third in the 100-yard freestyle, Emilia Barck finished in second in the 100-yard backstroke and fourth in the 200-yard IM and Jasmine Fok finished first in the 100-yard butterfly and fifth in the 200-yard IM.

The girls relay teams were equally impressive finishing first in the 200-yard medley relay (Smith, Barck, Fox and senior Amber van Meines) and in the 400-yard freestyle relay (Barck, sophomore Madison Blackwell, Fok and Smith) and third in the 200-yard freestyle relay (Blackwell, van Meines, senior Audrey Le-Nguyen, and senior Maggie Hawkins).

Others who finished for Campolindo were Madison Blackwell who finished sixth in the 200-yard freestyle and seventh in the 100-yard free, Le-Nguyen, 12th in the 50-yard freestyle, junior Kaia Levenfeld, ninth in the 100-yard butterfly,

van Meines and freshman Clare Baker 11th in the 500-yard free.

Leading the boys was senior Theoden Yavuzer-Judd who won the 100-yard breaststroke and had a fifth-place finish in the 400-yard freestyle relay team (Yavuzer-Judd, and seniors Tommy Richards, Henrik Barck, and Nathan Levy).

The 200-yard medley relay team (seniors Owen Younger, Nathan Levy, Tommy Richards and junior Henrik Barck) finished in sixth and the 200-yard freestyle relay team (Yavuzer-Judd, Younger, junior Grant Rosch and senior West Temkin) finished in sixth place.

"We have a lot of young talent and they swim well," Campolindo head coach Ron Heidary said. "I believe it's been about 18 years since the girls won the NCS tournament. Most of our swimmers have been swimming year-round with us since seventh grade at Orinda Aquatics and they've slowly gotten better each year."

At the state meet, the Campolindo girls finished in fifth place and the boys in 57th place and their combined scores placed them ninth out of 132 schools. "We were missing some of our girls and could have finished higher but we were competitive with the team that we brought," Heidary said. "We only brought two boys with many of our swimmers competing in a water polo tournament."

The Acalanes girls were led by freshman Sadie Suppiger who finished eighth in the 100-yard backstroke and 14th in the 100-yard freestyle. The girls relay 200-yard freestyle relay team (juniors Lila Waechter, Sophie Hendrickson, Sophie MacKay, and freshman Sadie Suppiger) finished in fourth and the 400-yard freestyle relay team (Waechter, MacKay, junior Sara Archer and Suppiger) finished in sixth place.

Junior Parker Etnyre placed 14th in the boys' 200-yard freestyle.

Leading the girls' individual events for Miramonte was junior Natalie Stryker who fin-

ished in eighth in the 50-yard freestyle and 15th in the 100-yard freestyle.

The Lady Matadors 200-yard freestyle relay team (seniors Ella Dulski and Grace Clark, freshman Bea Hearey and Stryker) finished in 10th; the 200-yard medley relay team (Clark, Dulski, senior Paige Meyers, and freshman Ali Larsen) finished in 14th and the 400-yard freestyle relay team (Hearey, Stryker, junior Petra Cherry, and Grace) finished in 15th place.

The boys 200-yard free style and medley teams (freshman Logan Gunn, sophomore Zach Hoffman, junior Pat Stice, and senior Dax Sherwood) finished in ninth and 15th respectively.

"Natalie had an excellent year individually," Rose said. "She a talented swimmer that tries hard and does things right and Dax was excellent at the league meet and made the record board at Miramonte in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle."

Despite some key swimmers having to miss the meet for personal reasons, Rose was effusive in his praise of the team: "They did great. We spoke a lot about what it takes to be a team and to compete at a high

level and the team embraced it and the boys' and girls' teams performed very well. We have a superb young team and a very bright future."

It was a good year all around for Orinda Aquatics. With swimmers from all three Lamorinda schools, they were also represented by swimmers from 11 other high schools, competing in 82 individual events which included 31 double event qualifiers.

For Don Heidary of Orinda Aquatics, success had to be in and out of the pool. "It was a good year for us," Heidary said. "We had a lot of OA swimmers that placed high with several individual event winners and a lot of relay wins."

Besides the aquatics and academics, leadership is the third aspect that is of equal importance. "Our tagline is putting character first in swimming and in life and we talk about it extensively and it's embedded into the program on a daily basis," Heidary said. "The character side is being a leader and a role model and making the right decisions and building that culture out, not just for those who are innate leaders but having it culture driven."

Individual and team success for Lamorinda at Meet of Champions

By 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, Megan 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."

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