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Miramonte #10 Emma Romweber, Campolindo #15 Clara Biddle Photos Mark Bell Miramonte #8 Hannah Rush, Campolindo #19 Maddie Carpenter

Lots of fresh faces on Lamorinda girls' volleyball teams

By Jon Kingdon

As a rule, there is always a certain amount of turnover with every high school team, mostly through graduation. This is a year that has seen the Lamorinda girls' volleyball teams having lost more than their share of players from last year and having to rely on a large number of underclassmen and first year players up from their JV teams.

Acalanes
With a roster having only two seniors, the Dons are relying on a core of seven juniors and two sophomores this season. So far, so good with Acalanes having a record of 8-4. "In our first few games, it was knowing that it is a growing experience for our players because a lot of them haven't been on varsity," head coach Haley Walsh said. "They were still getting used to the rhythm and the pace of playing at a higher level and after a big win against Rancho Cotate in our third match, it looks like we're just about there."
Both the varsity and JV teams have a lot of size

which has helped in the team's early success. The front line has only one returning player, junior outside hitter MaeLin Mason along with six other juniors and three sophomores. "We're excited about the different front row players on our roster that we have to utilize," Walsh said. "We're also able to use all of them multiple times with multiple positions and it's nice to have that flexibility."
Walsh has made it a point to use every one of her frontline players: "We have a number of players from last year's JV team that had a 21-7 record and none of them seem to be intimidated at playing on the varsity and by playing them all, when we get to the NCS, I will know that I can call on anyone off the bench. We've played some tough teams early and it has helped with the maturation process."
Three sophomores – Sophia Terry, Piper Coy and Kyla Rose Fox – have all been effective players on the front line. "It can be a little bit intimidating to play as sophomores and we saw that in the first set of the first match, but ever since then they've been balling out

and not looking back," Walsh said. "Sophia and Piper have made a great transition. Kyla is injured right now, but we're looking forward to her return hopefully in a couple of weeks. Junior Annie Baker has also stepped up on the right side."
There is senior leadership on the back line led by libero Jade Profilio and defensive specialist Mika Boboco. "Jade and Mika have really stepped up in terms of running our defense and solidifying it so that everyone feels comfortable in their zones," Walsh said. "Junior setter Emma Seelenbacher is also part of the group that has helped players like sophomore Christina Hageboeck in adjusting to the setter position. As a junior, Jade had 540 digs last season and is hoping to conclude her career with over 1,000 digs."
For Walsh, at this point, the strength of the team's offense and its ability to attack from multiple positions and out of system, along with the flexibility helped by having nine players on the front that she has the confidence to use.

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Orinda council discusses proposed new MOFD fire ordinance

By Alison Burns

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) on Aug. 31 announced that a Special Meeting would take place in the Community Center on Sept. 6 in order to "introduce and waive" the reading of Amended Fuel Break Ordinance 23-08. Or to give the document its full name: "An Ordinance of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District of Contra Costa County, California, Adopting Requirements for Fuel Breaks on Certain Parcels in Both the State Responsibility and Local Responsibility Areas within the Fire District, Adopting Findings of Fact Regarding Fire Hazards in the Fire District, Adopting Findings of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act, and Repealing Ordinance 23-04."

Since the regular Orinda City Council Meeting took place on Sept. 5 – one day before the new fire ordinance was presented at the MOFD board meeting – much of last Tuesday's city council discussion could only be conjecture, although members of the

public who stood at the lectern or called in via Zoom had plenty to say.
At first glance this new ordinance reads almost the same as its previous iteration (Ordinance 23-04, February 2023) but, according to the Orinda residents, the city manager and council members who spoke at the Sept. 5 council meeting, the new requirements appear somewhat more controversial. In the meantime, the previous ordinance has been suspended. The new (19 page) document can be found online at: www.mofd.org/ordinances-resolutions or through the District Clerk at (925) 258-4501.
Leading the discussion at the council meeting, Mayor Inga Miller said that she had asked for the ordinance to be placed on the agenda "in a somewhat unusual format," rather than go through the regular process of having city staff initiate each agenda item first, because there had not been enough time for the council to have a meeting and comment – although Miller had herself spent a lot of time over the holiday weekend studying the docu-

ment and wanted to give some factual background.
The revised ordinance, she said, covers "any area that's a community at risk" – which in this case is defined as all of Orinda and Moraga – with different rules applying according to the size of the land: essentially if the property is under an acre, the whole ordinance applies, but if the parcel is over an acre, the ordinance calls for a 100-foot buffer around the property.
However, Council Member Brandyn Iverson pointed out that as a lay person, she felt that the way the new ordinance reads, "all of Moraga and all of Orinda is a fuel break – every house, every yard ... all landscaping and grass and trees and critters," and that wording of this latest fire ordinance is a real paradigm shift for a city that has so much natural beauty and animal life. She said she understood that a lot of thought was put into exceptions but "it feels that the default is that everything is to be cleared unless you can argue for maybe larger more beautiful trees."

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