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Miramonte Boys Reclaim NCS Water Polo Title in Sudden Death Overtime

By Marissa Harnett



Photo Doug Kohen

anticipated rematch, in the semi-finals of this season on November 10.

Acalanes head coach Clarke Tamriki said before the game against Miramonte that Acalanes was ready to take on their rivals. "We like to compete against this team, so both teams always play hard. We like to think that every year is an NCS opportunity. Our team needs to stay as a unit on defense, and execute on when given the chance. We like our chances."

Miramonte coach James Lathrop, said it was a good test. "It has been a goal of the Miramonte team since the start of the season to play for the NCS title and having to play Acalanes in the semi-final. Acalanes knows our team better than anyone else and always challenges us to play our best."

Because of their knowledge of each others' game, neither team could gain a large lead. Miramonte won in a tight, back and forth game, 6-5. Miramonte juniors Charlie Wisner and Jack Fellner split the Mats' six goals, scoring three each. Acalanes junior Connor Reid also logged three goals.

With that win, the Mats moved forward to face the #1 San Ramon Valley in the finals at Acalanes High School. San Ramon recorded just one loss in the season and won the East Bay Athletic League title.

Miramonte was not intimidated by San Ramon Valley's record. "Despite that we had six losses, compared to SRV's one, we knew that those losses were against some of the top teams in the state and those games had helped the players to prepare for the championship."

The Saturday final match was an intense fight to the end. It took three overtimes for Miramonte to eek out the 8-7 win.

After falling behind in the first quarter, 4-1, the Mats dug deep and pulled themselves back into the game with good defense. The teams battled before Wisner scored to tie the game at 7-7, forcing overtime. After two 3-minute overtimes and no decision, the teams played a sudden death overtime. The Mats won the sprint to gain ball possession and implemented a textbook play to set up Wisner to score the winning goal. Goalie Drew Holland made key saves in the second half and overtime to help secure the Mats' win.

Lathrop said his team was prepared for the game. "I was very proud of the determination the players showed and the effort that they put into the season, which culminated in a North Coast Section championship. The team was very confident going into the game."

Girls Water Polo NCS Results

The Lamorinda girls also fared well. All the teams were ranked in the top four: #2 Campolindo, #3 Acalanes, and #4 Miramonte. Miramonte lost to #1 Las Lomas, 13-6 in the semi-finals and Acalanes fell to Campolindo, 10-9.

Campolindo continued to the finals to face Las Lomas. Campo, the defending NCS champions, ultimately lost to the Lady Knights, 10-5.

The high school water polo season came to a close in a dramatic North Coast Section tournament. The NCS tournament began on November 2 and concluded on November 12, to name the Miramonte boys' team the champions. Acalanes reached the semi-finals before falling to Miramonte. Campolindo lost in the quarterfinals to Acalanes.

The Miramonte boys' team has dominated high school water polo in the NCS for the last sixteen years; their streak was only interrupted by De La Salle for four of those years in the early 2000s. Last year, Miramonte lost their championship title of five consecutive years to local Lamorinda rival, Acalanes.

In the quarterfinal round #3 Acalanes defeated #6 Campolindo, 20-10 behind seven goals from senior Tanner Cullen, the game's high scorer. Campo was led by senior Tor Jensen with four goals.

Second-ranked Miramonte solidly defeated #7 Washington High School (Fremont), 15-5, to secure their spot in the semi-finals against Acalanes.

Miramonte and Acalanes faced off again in a much



Photo Doug Kohen

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