

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

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## All six Lamorinda lacrosse teams make it to the NCS tournament *Dons boys defeat Cougars in DAL*



Photo Will Lovitt

Campo's #13 Griffin Tetz shoots to Acalanes goalie Blake Chehlaoul

By Jon Kingdon

After an early season rout by Acalanes (14-4), Campolindo boys' lacrosse head coach Colin Knightly had his team looking for revenge in the DAL championship game. "We wanted to go out there and play them as tough as possible. We made a number of adjustments this game to make their life difficult and to make sure we were competitive," Knightly said. "It was a tough loss but a game that we could be proud of and one that prepared us for the NCS tournament."

Acalanes head coach Lorne Smith had his team equally focused on the championship game. "It was our goal at the beginning of the year to win the DAL championship and then to compete for an NCS championship and I think we're moving in the right direction," Smith said. "We still have a lot that we can improve on and we're all looking forward to competing in the NCS."

Acalanes defeated Campolindo by a score of 12-10 in a game that was closer than the score indicated. Campolindo was ahead 6-4 at the half led by senior Harrison Leenhouts five goals. In the third quarter, goals from Owen Estee, Dylan and Cooper Olson, and Marshall Anderson put Acalanes ahead while two final goals by Simon Appel and one more by Estee closed out the scoring. Acalanes goalies Blake Chelaoui and Dante Avicolli stopped 32 shots insuring the victory.

With winning records by all the Lamorinda teams, each team got a seeding: Acalanes-14-2 with a 1 seed, Campolindo-11-4 with a 5 seed, and Miramonte-8-6 with a 6 seed that allowed each team to play at home in their first NCS game, which each team won, advancing to the second round.

**Acalanes**  
After finishing the 2022 season

with a 12-9 record, head coach Lorne Smith saw a "real upside" to the 2023 team and proved to be prescient with the Dons finishing the regular season with a 13-2 record.

"Our senior class have been great leaders that have really shaped the character of our team," Smith said.

Leading the offense are Owen Estee, Dave Depaepe, and Ben Foox. "Owen has been both an emotional and offensive leader," Smith said. "He just loves playing lacrosse and you can't keep him off the field of play. Dave has been an emotional, fiery player that has a real engine that gets the team going. Ben has been incredible winning faceoffs, making good things start to happen and has been the cause for a lot of our momentum."

Blake Chehlaoui has been the starting goalie. "Blake has been a real asset in the goal for sure," Smith said. "He's been making a lot of saves and clears the ball really well."

It's been a solid defense in front of Chehlaoui that has only allowed 6.8 goals per game and is led by George Churchill, John Cain, Connor Faust, Colin Mahlmquist and Evren Rose, all of whom Smith speaks highly of: "George has brought a level of experience, confidence, physicality and perspective to the game which really helps to lock things down. John, up top, really locks it down from the mid-field. He is in the best shape I've ever seen in a lacrosse player, sprinting all over the field, playing almost every run in the game and is having a great year. All of our close defensemen like Connor Faust and Colin Mahlmquist do a good job down low, supporting each other well. Evren at the midfield spot has really developed into a good defensive player and has been a real asset, taking almost every defensive midi run."

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## *Campo girls defeat Acalanes in DAL Championship*



Campolindo girls Lacrosse team

Photo Allison Curletto

By Jon Kingdon

Coming into the DAL championship game against Campolindo, Acalanes head coach Bill Frazier knew that the girls' lacrosse team had their hands full against the top seeded Cougars. "We've had a solid team all year, but we tend to make just enough mistakes that can make it challenging to beat a top team like Campolindo."

It was too much of a team effort by Campolindo for Acalanes to overcome with the Cougars coming out on top 16-8. "We were able to move the ball well in transition after winning off the draw," Campolindo head coach Devin Combe said. "We saw our players in the field and were able to finish it with our shots. Our defense played strong as a unit, communicating well. We were able to get all of our players into the game and everybody contributed, and it was good to get Molly Stephens back in full health after having suffered a concussion earlier in the season."

**Campolindo**

After starting off the season losing two of their first three games, the Cougars quickly got back on track to win 11 of their next 12 games. For head coach Devin Combe, it was a matter of challenging the team to compete against top opponents: "Our two losses were against Tamalpais, the number one ranked team in Division II and Carondelet, a dominating team in Division I."

The team has been led by senior co-captains Catie McCauley and Paige Davis, both of whom will be playing for UC Davis next year, joining Annie Cimperman from last year's team.

McCauley has had 68 goals on 75% of her shots with 24 assists and Davis has 52 goals on 80% of her shots with 30 assists. "We've had very dominating performances from the two of them these past two years," Combe said. "They have both been very good at

seeing and involving their teammates. If the team is not scoring well, Catie will go to the cage if the team needs goals. Paige makes it a point to help her teammates and we will need to remind her that she can score as well."

Combe appreciates that the team could not be as successful as they have been if they had only two players to rely on. Senior Bridgette Lane (35 goals & 26 assists) and junior Molly Stephens (12 goals & 12 assists) have also had top seasons. "Bridgette and Molly among others have been key ingredients to the team's success because it's exhausting if you have to rely on only two players," Combe said.

The Cougars are averaging 15.4 goals per game, scoring on 72% of their shots and Combs attributes their high shooting percentage to the talents of their goalie, junior Haley Richards. "When you have a good goalie in the cage in practice, our players know they have to shoot better and as a rule, they have found most of their opposing goalies to be not as intimidating as shooting against Haley every day in practice," Combe said.

Richards, who has been dominant since her freshman year, has stopped 57.4% of the shots on goal and Combe still sees room for improvement in her play: "Haley's feet have gotten faster, and she has been working a lot on her range. The biggest overall factor has been her mental preparation for games, getting to a place where she can take ownership but not feel the entire weight of a win or loss solely on her back, which will be huge."

Contributing to the success of Richards has been the play of the defense in front of her, led by seniors Ava Martinez, Katie Duff, and junior Sadie Geenty. "Our defense has shown the biggest growth for us," Combe said. "Ava, Katie, and Sadie Geenty have been the anchors on the defense."

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