

LAMORINDA SPORTS

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Success for Lamorinda girls soccer led by Miramonte's NCS championship

By Jon Kingdon

It was a classic matchup between the No. 1 seeded **Miramonte** and No. 2 seeded Cardinal Newman high schools at Miramonte in the NCS championship game at Miramonte last Friday.

With the score tied at 2-2 after two 10-minute overtime sessions and in the second round of penalty kicks, Miramonte won on a sudden death kick by Shauna Lindheim after a diving save by Miramonte goalie Talia Karden.

Trailing 1-0 at the end of the first half, Miramonte scored the next two goals by Madyson Yu on an unassisted goal and Sadie Leal Schuman on a penalty kick with 17 minutes left in the game, though Cardinal Newman scored on their next possession.

For Miramonte head coach Taylor Abbott, the difference in the teams came down to one thing: "Heart! This team has been working so hard all year and they didn't want to lose. It took playing the whole 100 minutes which was unbelievable, and it was just a perfect ending."

With Cardinal Newman up 4-3 in the first round of penalty kicks, Kardon made the save and Olivia Penney then converted for Mira-

monte to put the game into sudden death. Another save by Kardon was followed by Lindheim's goal.

Kardon, a freshman who began the season on the JV team, was called up to the varsity due to an injury to the Matador's starting goalie. "Talia put in so much work with an extra goalie coach and on her own and then for her to get to the saves in the penalty kick shootout is just unheard of and I'm really happy for her."

It was as much a mental plan as it was the physical success in Kardon's stopping the final two penalty kicks: "I just kept my mind completely blank because I tend to get in my head a little bit," Kardon said "My plan was always to focus on where the shooters were positioned and where to commit to the dive and it was a matter of not hesitating or overthinking it."

The 17-2-2 Matadors were 3-15-1 just two years ago and Abbott highlighted his senior co-captains Lindheim and Zoe Rossiter because "They are well aware of where the program was and where it's going."

Prior to taking the winning shot, Lindheim was in the moment and after the winning shot



Photo Ann Murphy

took a second to look back. "I felt I got into their goalies' head by staring in the opposite direction and felt she would go that way and that's exactly what happened," Lindheim said. "I've seen this program transform and it's just so exciting to finish out my senior year on such a high level."

Abbott was hard pressed to contain his excitement after the final goal. "I'm getting goosebumps thinking about Shauna getting the penalty kick to seal the victory. It was just poetic. We couldn't have

scripted it any better."

Acalanes

Despite having lost 12 seniors to graduation, Acalanes had a core of 11 juniors to step in this season. "We had a lot of kids stepping up into new roles and taking on important leadership positions as captains, starters and first-time kids getting big minutes," head coach Nick Barbarino said. "They work hard, have a great attitude, and a number of them have learned through the season."

The Dons finished the season with a 11-6-4 record, 7-3-2 in league

and made it to the second round of the NCS playoffs, losing to the No. 1 seed Casa Grande 3-0.

Acalanes had a dominant defense only giving up 18 goals all season. "Junior goalie Melisa Adatepe got her voice this year as a first-time starter and sophomore Sara Tarnai also saw game time as well," Barbarino said. "Tori Hitt, Edie Berzansky, and Tatum Keely are all sophomores in our backline that start, and freshman Reese Tierney also got big minutes."

The offense was a young group with junior

Nicole Nguyen the only one on the front line with a lot of experience. Junior Livi Foster, on the varsity for the first time, started most of the time. "Our offense has created a lot of opportunities we have just missed a lot of really good chances when usually that's the opposite," Barbarino said. "Megan Yee was a winger who stepped in at right back and has done a phenomenal job, starting every game, and freshman Reese Tierney has basically played every minute this season. In fact, everyone stepped up." ... continued on Page 13

Continued success for Campolindo, and major turnaround for Miramonte boys basketball

By Jon Kingdon

With no returning player that had scored in double figures and the loss of starting point guard Tyler Bergren to a season ending injury, **Campolindo** head coach Steven Dyer was at best cautiously optimistic about the team's prospects allowing that though this team was the "most inexperienced team I've had at Campolindo with a chance to be pretty good," offering the proviso that "we just have to make progress every week."

Dyer would go deep into his roster all season, having 11 players that appeared in at least 20 games and finished the season with a 22-8 record (9-3 in league play) and making it to the second round of the NCS Division I playoffs. Dyer spoke highly about the team's overall performance. "We had a lot of guys that have won at

lower levels, and that translated to the next level," Dyer said. "We didn't necessarily have the players with flashy stats as we've had in the past, but we had a true team with guys buying into their roles. This has been one of my favorite teams to coach because there's been no drama and all the guys have been fun to coach. Guys just came ready to work and it's been really rewarding."

Stepping up on offense were seniors Dylan Mansour (13.9/+6.2) and Tim Smith (+9.8/+9.1) and junior Gavin Rendle (11.1/+9.5), all increasing their scoring averages. Smith also increased his rebounds per game from 0.7 last season to 7.0. "Tim made a ton of progress from last year by working incredibly hard. He would stay after practice and work extra on his game and it

was a day and night difference from last year," Dyer said.

Despite so many new players on the varsity, it was a roster that came up learning the Dyer system on the Campolindo freshmen and JV teams. Once again, the Cougars' signature was the play of its defense, only giving up 47.5 points per game, holding two teams under 22 points. "Our younger players have used the same system we use on varsity, so it was just a matter of learning how to do it at the varsity level playing against better guys, and it just takes a lot of work to be good defensively," Dyer said. "Our freshmen coach Nicky Aikawa and JV coach Spenser McDonald do a great job in preparing these guys to move up to the varsity and it's not as hard for me to demand they play

defense because it's already been demanded at the lower level."

Miramonte

After last season's 5-22 record, Miramonte was ranked 603 out of 605 California schools. Head coach Chris Lavdiotis made it clear what needed to happen this season. "We determined what we need to do to get better and then put it in the rearview mirror."

The Matadors improved their record to 19-12, won their first two NCS playoff games before losing to the No. 1 seeded University High School, jumping up 378 spots, finishing the year ranked 225 in the state. The team scored 15 more points and gave up six fewer points per game than last season.

"This was a great season with a tremendous group of kids that were dedicated and committed to working

together," Lavdiotis said. "The kids earned everything they got. There were a lot of doubters and we proved them wrong. From top to bottom, this was one of the best groups of kids I've coached."

Nine of the players improved their scoring averages this season led by seniors Marcus Robinson (+4.8), Thomas Zwahlen (+3.3), Chris Kaufhold (+2.8) and junior Jack Quinnild (+4.7). The team converted 70% of their foul shots, assisted on 73% of their baskets and improved their assist to turnover ratio.

"It was little things like that," Lavdiotis said. "Our guys made a concerted effort to really play well together, and their attitudes were wonderful and that's why it was so hard to have the season end." Lavdiotis and his

staff also put the effort in off the court. "We watched a lot of videos, and our team was always prepared so that nothing any of our opponents did surprised us," Lavdiotis said. "We did have a bad two minutes in the third quarter against University, where things fell apart and that was the game which was so unfortunate."

Despite losing six of their top eight scorers to graduation, a number of underclassmen got substantial minutes. "We will lose a lot of players but it's how we're developing our next wave of players," Lavdiotis said. "A lot of our underclassmen got a lot of valuable experience, so we'll be good next season."

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