

Published February 28th, 2024

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

By Jon Kingdon



Photo Ann Murphy

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 Kardon.

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 Miramonte 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 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 Hiatt, 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."

#### Campolindo

Campolindo finished with an 11-8 overall record, 8-4 in league play and made it to the second round of the NCS before losing to Petaluma 3-2. "With our players coming from so many different club teams, it took a little bit of time for the team to come together, making plays and winning games," head coach Luis Pinto said.

Pinto came to rely on captains Molly Dougherty, Sara Brockmeier and Indira Naylor. "They showed great leadership, stepped it up on the field and made it fun to watch," Pinto said.

The offense was led by Naylor (17G, 6A), Mylie Jaquet (15G, 16A), Maya Abughosh (9G, 8A) and freshman Zoe Lehrman (7G, 4A) and followed Pinto's direction to be aggressive. "The best defense is a strong offense, so we didn't sit back and wait," Pinto said.

Senior goalie Maya Schwartz was solid in goal and junior Natalie Hsia was the team's leading defender. "With Maya's communication and leadership, she made it easier for our backline," Pinto said. "Natalie was a complete player who was very strong and fast and was really able to work the ball in the air and on the ground."

Reach the reporter at: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA