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## Lamorinda Girls' Soccer Crashes NCS Playoffs

By Alex Crook



Anja Simonsen Photo Peter Simonsen

Campolindo, Miramonte and Acalanes all appeared optimistic heading into this year's North Coast Section (NCS) girls' soccer playoffs. Finishing with strong records put all three teams in the top half of the sixteen-team bracket. The teams proved their dominance in the opening games of the post season, all posting shutout victories on February 17th.

The highest of the three seeds belonged to Campolindo, at #4. The Cougars opened their run by easily shutting out visiting St. Mary's 4-0. Goals came from senior midfielder and captain Aly MacDonald, senior defender Sara Tomas and twice from sophomore striker Valerie Margerum. "It was a good needed win and a great way to start off the playoffs," remarked freshman goalkeeper Sophie Leksan, who posted a shutout in the opening win over the Panthers.

In the next round on February 20th, the Cougars were upset by to cross-town rival #5 Miramonte.

Meanwhile, Miramonte hosted and beat Hayward 2-0. Freshman midfielder Ashley Kawaguchi and junior forward MacKenzie Martin both found the back of the net for the Matadors. Next up for the Mats was rival Campolindo, who they handled by the score of 1-0. "It

was awesome beating Campo because we knew it was going to be a tough game and that it would determine whether or not we continued on in NCS," commented Martin on taking down their rival in the playoffs. From there, the Mats moved onto a semi-final showdown with top-ranked Bishop O'Dowd on February 24th, but the Dragons prevailed 5-2, keeping their one-loss season alive. Senior forward Shelby Church and sophomore midfielder Hosanna Fuller tallied both Matador goals in the losing effort.

Just barely making the cut in the better half of the bracket, seventh-seed Acalanes took down twelfth-seed El Cerrito 2-0 before upsetting the second seed Berean Christian 2-1 in overtime. Freshman forward Kaitlin McGee scored the game-winner in the extra session. Acalanes junior forward and captain Anja Simonson commented on her team's performance throughout this year's postseason: "I think overall we performed well, but definitely not up to our potential. I hope that next year we can take it to an even higher level." Simonson led the Dons for the season in both goals and assists, scoring eight times and tallying seven assists. The win over Berean Christian set up a semi-final match with fellow DFAL opponent Alhambra, in which the Dons fell 1-0 at home.



Campolindo junior striker Eliza Pedder chases down the ball against St. Mary's (Albany). The Cougars defeated the Panthers 4-0. Photo Doug Kohen

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