

SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS

Lamorinda Boys' Basketball Splits Rivalry Games

By Conrad Bassett



James Griffin (22) rebounds the ball over Carl King (11)

Photo Doug Kohen



Miramonte's Anthony Pignagnelli (1) wins the opening tip-off

Photo Jordan Fong



Carl King (11) shoots over Acalanes defender Noah Orlik (11)

Photo Doug Kohen

The three Lamorinda boys' high school basketball teams returned a combined three starters from a year ago and the teams looked to be balanced. The early games of Diablo Foothill Athletic League play showed just that. Miramonte, Acalanes and Campolindo challenged each other the last two weeks and each team split the rivalry series with one win and one loss.

Miramonte at Acalanes

After playing much of their pre-season schedule without several of their top players due to post-season football, the Matadors traveled with a full squad to Acalanes to open the league season on January 4.

The game proved to be a

close match. Senior Anthony Pignagnelli hit a basket early to get the Mats on the board first. Dons junior James Griffin came back at the other end to tie it early. Each team led in the period before junior Ross Anderson hit a follow-up shot to put Miramonte up, 17-14.

The second period was nearly a repeat of the first; they exchanged leads early on. The Dons trailed by four before a nine point run started with a Griffin three. Miramonte came back with a 7-0 run behind Pignagnelli and sophomore Kiran Shastri. Dons senior Michael Jackson recorded a traditional three point play with 11 seconds left to give Acalanes a 35-34 lead at intermission.

The third period was just as competitive. Griffin opened the

scoring with a three to give the Dons a four-point lead, but the Mats fought back. Senior Kazz Tamura led another 7-0 run to give Miramonte a 49-43 lead to end the period.

Miramonte looked like they were ready to pull away with a 10-point lead with less than seven minutes to go in the fourth quarter. The Dons stormed back to cut the lead to 57-55.

The Mats clung to a four point lead when Anderson hit two free throws with 1:46 to go. With 21 seconds left in the game, Griffin hit a three to cut the lead to 61-60. The Dons fouled Shastri after the inbounds pass and he calmly hit the front end of a one-for-one for a 62-60 Mat lead. He missed the second, but the Dons were unable to score and Miramonte headed back to Orinda with a two point win, 62-60.

Pignagnelli led all scorers with 20 points and seven steals. Anderson added 12 points and 12 rebounds. Shastri finished with 10 points. For the Dons, Griffin and senior Stephen Collins each had 16.

Acalanes at Campolindo

Three days later the Dons headed to Campolindo to take on the Cougars.

Campo scored early and often as they jumped off to a 15-5 lead after the first period.

The Dons slowly came back in the second quarter. Griffin and Jackson each hit threes before sophomore Griffin Piatt hit a layup for Campo's first points with 4:26 to go in the second period.

Collins scored the next five Dons points and by halftime, the Dons had clawed all the way back. Collins hit a three near the end and the Dons led 24-20.

The third period saw another back and forth duel as Campo senior Carl King scored 11 of his 17 points. At the end of three it was knotted up at 36.

Griffin started out the last quarter stealing an errant Campo pass and making a layup. Piatt came right back with a three and Dons junior Kevin Huber answered with his own three. Again, the teams traded baskets to again tie at 47 all.

Senior Alan Hickey made a shot for Campo to give them a 49-47 lead and Collins answered with a three for a Dons to give them the lead. Collins added another three and two free throws with 26 seconds left to seal the deal; Acalanes recorded a 57-51 victory. Collins had a game-high 20 and Griffin chipped in 14.

Campolindo at Miramonte

Campolindo traveled to Miramonte last Friday—looking to avenge their season ending loss to the Matadors in last year's NCS playoffs; and avenge they did, winning 50 to 38.

Campolindo held Miramonte from scoring a field goal for almost seven and a half minutes to take a 17-5 lead after one period.

The teams went back and forth in the second period and Campo led 24-11.

In the third period, Campo opened up the lead behind layups from sophomore John Schmitz and junior Robbie Wirth and with five minutes to go, the Cougars had a 31-13 lead.

Pignagnelli made a steal and finished with a layup and led an 11-2 run to get the Mats within nine, but then Piatt hit a lay-up and was fouled and the Mats never got closer. Sophomore Jack Evans ended the period with a half court three at the buzzer. Campo led 42-28.

The lead grew to 20 before the coaches freely substituted and Campo notched a 13-point win. King led Campolindo with 13 while Pignagnelli had 11 for Miramonte.

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Lamorinda Schools

OIS Art Teacher Trains Winning Artists

By Sophie Braccini



Marina Box's winning poster

Photo courtesy www.orindaschools.org

Bob Murtagh, President of the Moraga Lions Club, believes that Orinda Intermediate School teacher Susan Weiss has a special talent. For two years in a row, the art teacher's class has produced the winning entry in the Lions' Peace Poster contest for Alameda/Contra Costa County. Weiss herself praises the creativity of her students and acknowledges that the concept of the contest, that makes student think creatively about peace, has inspired her. The 2010 County winner was Marina Box, and the 2009 winner was Natalie Vigo.

"The Lions runs a peace poster contest every year in which some 500,000 kids compete all over the world," says Murtagh, "and for the past two years a student

from Mrs. Weiss class won in our district – Contra Costa/Alameda. She just seems to be able to motivate her students at a higher level." The whole idea of the competition is to get students to think about peace, its meaning and its symbols. Each year the theme is slightly different, this year it was "vision of peace."

"When the Lions contacted me four years ago I looked at the information they sent," remembers Weiss, "it was something different than what I had done before, and a great opportunity that got the kids excited."

"The beginning of the school year starts with a drawing unit that's 3-4 weeks long. Then I use the contest as the focal point for a long

process that builds to it, teaching the use of six different mediums," explains Weiss, "I have them do peace-related things, then they put the poster together. They do sketches, a rough draft, and choose mixed mediums according to the contest's restrictions." This year, she got 60 entries out of a class of 80 7th and 8th graders.

Weiss has a project-oriented approach to teaching art. She has been teaching at Orinda Intermediate (OIS) for 20 years and praises the talent and focus of her students. She believes that the Peace Poster competition stimulates her young students and she plans to continue having her classes participate. The winner of the District level wins \$100 for his/her school and gets a gift certificate.

Both Stanley Middle School and Orinda Intermediate participated in the competition. Stanley's posters can be seen at the Moraga library (the Lafayette library was not available) and the Orinda library displays the OIS posters. The OIS entries can also be seen on Susan Weiss' web page on the school web site, www.orindaschools.org/ois.

For an international perspective on the competition, go to lionsclubs.org and check the peace posters finalists. Children from all over the world will amaze you with their creativity.

Advertising

How Six Figure Income Families Get Thousands of Dollars in Free Money For College

Local man teaches free workshops to help parents save thousands in process

Moraga—East Bay parents that are planning on sending a child to college in the next few years, but aren't quite sure how to pay for it can now rest a little easier. Gerna Benz of Bay Area College Planners has been educating families in the community for over 15 years.

"It's really sad, but most parents that we talk to have done real well financially, but never found the time to save for college, and now they're facing a bill of \$18,000-\$45,000 a year, and they don't know who to turn to," he says. "Further, most of the time, all they hear is to not even bother applying for any aid because they make too much money. However, most of the time, that is simply not true even if they make a six-figure income."

Gerna would know, because his group has worked with over 1400 families in the last 10 years ranging from single moms to corporate CEO's, and they say they can help anyone get through the process and save a bundle.... no matter how good of a student they have or how much money they make.

"I got started in this because I was a very good student, but no one told us anything about how to access money for college, or even how to pick a career...so I didn't go right away. But, I vowed that I would learn the process and devote my time to helping families not fall into the same trap that we did. 'Simply put, we show parents the truth that they aren't hearing anywhere else about how the college process really works and save thousands of dollars in the process.'" Lamorinda parents will have an opportunity

to hear Gerna speak. He is teaching his class 'How to Give Your Kid a 4-Year College Education Without Going Broke!' on Thursday February 3rd at the Moraga Library located at 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, CA 94556 from 6:30pm-8pm.

"We'll discuss everything from the greatest myths about the college process, to how to send your student to a fancy private school for less than the cost of a junior college...it'll be like learning how to get a brand new Lexus for the price of a used pick up truck," he grins.

Topics will also include why private scholarships and 529 plans are a waste of time, how to double or even triple the amount of free money you receive from each school, and how to avoid the one mistake that will kill your chances of getting any money at all that almost every other parent will make and much, much more.

"They will learn a ton, and I do my best to make the class fun," he says. "It's like I'm giving them a super bright flash light to navigate a pitch black cave, while all the other parents continue to stumble around blindly! 'Don't forget: the class is totally free, but seats are limited. Also, we are not sure when we will be teaching these classes in the East Bay again since my February and March calendars are already filling up, so come on out and see me.' You can reserve a seat online at www.baycollegeplanners.com or by calling our 24 hour reservation line at (877) 924-3726.

Send sports stories and ideas to: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com