

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Fierce Competition in DFAL Volleyball

By Guy Dotan



Acalanes team at practice last week

Photo Doug Kohen

Last year's girls' volleyball season proved to be one of the most exciting in recent memory, and expectations are high for the DFAL this season as well. Last season featured four teams from DFAL qualifying for North Coast Section tournament. Campolindo won the NCS and eventually took the state title.

As the start of the regular season approaches all three Lamorinda teams are working to adjust to roster changes in the preseason. Miramonte lost four seniors last year—two were starters. Acalanes graduated only three seniors but are featuring five newcomers to the varsity squad.

Acalanes' head coach Steve Siegmann is not worried, however, "We've added a good amount of height to our team and along with the improvement of players from last year I would say we have our most athletic team since I have been at the school."

The team suffering the biggest losses to the starting lineup is the returning champs. The Cougars graduated seven seniors from last year's squad and will have eight brand new

varsity players, including three freshmen. Key losses include Abbie Noland, Chandler Moore, and Mary Vaccaro. Noland and Moore both finished All League First Team, while Vaccaro was the DFAL MVP.

Still, it will take a lot more than the loss of a few players to prevent Campolindo from following their perfect 12-0 regular season with another great year. The returning state champs are still the favorite to take first in the DFAL this year.

Miramonte looks to be the best challenger for the top spot. Last season, Miramonte finished in second place in DFAL with a solid 8-2 record. The two losses were to the hands of the rival Cougars, but that doesn't mean Miramonte expects to coast through the rest of the league.

"Literally all seven DFAL teams are going to be good this year and we are going to have to put up a fight every match to get a win," said Miramonte head coach Shannon Ross.

Ross hopes the team will improve throughout the season. "As a team we need to be more consistent all year. We

need to focus on things we can control, such as our serve receive passing, keeping the ball in play, and limiting little mental errors."

Acalanes' Coach Siegmann mentioned similar areas of improvement, among them the need for leadership. "The number one thing that we need to improve is our on court leadership, it's important in volleyball and we lacked in that department last year."

With official league matches beginning soon, competition and intensity should be high all year in the DFAL.

The season kicks off September 20, with Campolindo facing off against Alhambra, Acalanes against Las Lomas, while Miramonte has a bye. Two days later is the first Lamorinda rivalry match as the Cougars travel to face the Dons.

"I definitely think the DFAL is going to remain one of the top divisions in NCS ... with a lot of teams battling to take the league title, it should be a very fun year," Ross predicted.

## Gaels Lock Down Bennett

Men's basketball head coach signs 10-year contract



Randy Bennett at a press conference last year Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's College signed men's basketball coach Randy Bennett

to a new 10-year contract. Director of Athletics Mark Orr made the announcement on August 19.

"I'm thrilled that we are able to sign him to this long-term agreement and look forward to him leading Saint Mary's basketball for the next decade," said Orr.

Bennett has spent ten years with the Gaels and enters his 11th season as the all-time men's basketball wins leader with a record of 208-112. He led the team to post-season tourna-

ments five times, including the NCAA Sweet 16 tournament in 2010. Bennett has earned two West Coast Conference Coach of the Year awards.

"I'm really thankful to Mark Orr, Brother President Ronald Gallagher and the Saint Mary's administration for their support and for providing me the opportunity to continue to serve such a great institution," said Bennett. "My family and I enjoy being at Saint Mary's and living in such a supportive and positive community." C. Graveson

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