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## Lamorinda boys soccer preview

By Jon Kingdon



Photo Gint Federas

Last season, the Lamorinda boys soccer teams played in the Diablo-Foothill League which had six teams. This year they are in the Diablo League which has 13 teams. The schools that have been added are Ygnacio Valley, Concord, Clayton Valley, Berean Christian, Northgate, Mt. Diablo and Benicia which has created a new dynamic for the teams.

With a six-team league, the teams would play away and home games. With a 13-team league, it's now a one and done schedule. Miramonte will be playing Campolindo twice though only one of the games will count in the league standings. Only playing each other

once will give advantage to the teams that are best able to manage the one game, the schedule not allowing them to adjust to their opponent in a second game.

**Acalanes**

Coming off a successful season (17-8-1), Acalanes hasn't missed a beat through the early season. With a 5-2-1 record, the Dons have scored 16 goals and only given up 5 goals. It's been the ability of the individual players to work as a team that has led to their success, says head coach Paul Curtis: "It has been their willingness to work together as a unit rather than as a bunch of individuals. They have come together early in the season

and it's been great. With as many as a dozen of our players playing on different club teams, my main challenge has been to get them on the same page and the sooner the better."

Senior midfielders Travis Stevenson and Christian Ramsey and junior Nick Geannacopulos have been the key players on offense. Says Curtis: "Travis is an aggressive and elusive player. He is more of a slasher and is very focused and intense. Nick is technically sound with great vision and is a solid playmaker. He makes the players around him look good. Christian has had a lot of experience. He is a playmaker who handles and dis-

tributes the ball very well."

With both of goalies for Acalanes graduating last season, junior Will Easley and sophomore Owen Myall, two goalies, have stepped up and proven to be very effective in shutting down their opponent's offenses. "We're really glad to have Will starting in goal," says Curtis. "He is extremely athletic. He is a great study and is willing to do anything to be successful. He has played a lot of club soccer and is an exceptional young man. Owen has a lot of experience and just has to develop further."

The overall defense has been a strong unit that is led by co-captain Bernard Adri and has as many as six different players Curtis can call upon depending on the matchups.

Acalanes also has two freshmen that have stepped up and shown the ability to play with the upper classmen, midfielder Rhett Skrvana and defender Matt Walner.

Curtis appreciates how well things have developed: "We are a little light on experience but we are gaining it as we go. There have been no real negative surprises. Our co-captains Eric Voss, Stevenson and Adri have done a great job in leading the team. The boys are a good group that like each other and are willing to work hard and they bring a great attitude about learning."

**Campolindo**

After coaching Campolindo to a 130-46-32 record in seven seasons (2010-2016), Shane Carney took a year off due to the birth of his child. Last season, the team went off the rails with a 6-13-4 record. So many people prevailed upon Carney to come back that he chose to return as the team's head

coach. There has been an immediate turnaround for the Cougars going 8-2 so far this season.

Carney immediately saw a need for a change and attacked it with a real vigor: "The culture last year was really bad. I had to go in and get everyone to get back to working hard and putting the team first. It helped that I was able to start the process in the summer and let the team know that things were going to change to where it was before. The players came in this year with a better attitude and understood the need for commitment."

Both the offense and defense for Campolindo have proven to be dominating. After seven games, the Cougars have averaged over 3.2 goals a game and are only giving up a half a goal per game. An attitude change has proven to be the difference, says Carney: "We have a good group of guys that are putting in the work with no selfish attitudes. Our seniors want to leave their imprint on the program. How well we play together is going to make or break our season."

Last year's leading scorers Jose Carra-Hernandez (11 goals, 6 assists) and Kellen Clancy (6 goals, 3 assists) continue to lead the offense. Nathan Links and Riley Breul are also key players in the Cougars offense. Carney is constantly stressing unity: "The general theme is team work. There is no individualism. We're working hard on the movement of the ball and we have a lot of quick players that get into the spaces to attack. There is not one player that our opponents can defend. We come in waves instead of relying on one or two scorers."

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