

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Lamorinda freshmen make their mark on varsity teams



**Michelle Goll**

Photos Gint Federas



**Matt Radell**

**By Jon Kingdon**

It was in 1954 that freshmen were ruled ineligible to play varsity sports in college. It was not until 1973 when freshmen became eligible to play all sports on the varsity level again. Still more the exception than the rule for freshmen to be competitive on that level, it's no longer some-

thing that gives one pause to see a freshman competing against upperclassmen on both the high school and collegiate level.

In his fourth year at Campolindo, head coach Steven Dyer has had five freshmen that played for the varsity: "You will see more basketball players than football players because skill becomes more

important than size. The rise of AAU basketball has brought about more freshmen able to play for a varsity team." There are two freshmen that are on the Campolindo roster this year, Aiden Mahaney (15.2 ppg) and Matt Radell (7.9 ppg).

Mahaney, who played with the Flight OE team until eighth grade and for the West Coast Elite team last year, at-

tributes that experience to facilitating his transition to varsity basketball: "I played for the high school division last year and traveled all over the country. I played against so many top players in intense games, it really prepared me for high school."

Still there was an adjustment to a high school team as opposed to a club team, says Mahaney: "AAU can be more

like pickup games. At Campolindo, there is more structure and designed plays with more emphasis on defense and taking charges. Everything matters."

Radell saw a real difference between playing for Campolindo and in the AAU: "The skill levels were similar but at Campolindo the players want it more. Our team plays harder and the games are more physical in general."

It takes more than just ability for a freshman to be effective on the varsity, says Dyer: "It's important for the freshmen to realize that they are not going to be the top dog when they show up. They're playing in more advanced situations and the talent level is much higher. As for maturity, it's my job to teach it to them."

Radell brings good height to the game but concedes that there is a lot for him to work on: "I play center so I have to deal with the bigger guys and often I've not been evenly matched weight wise. My goal is to continue to bulk up and get a stronger so I can bang around a little more."

Mahaney's transition was eased by his brother, Carter, who is a junior and played on the varsity as a freshman as well, says Aiden: "It's nice to play with Carter. His advice to me was to keep working. There was a lot of hype around me and I just had to prove myself and that I was going to play against more physical players so I had to get my body ready for that."

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