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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Acalanes girls tennis finishes year with tough loss



Ella Morris



Kayli Harley



Emily Burkowitz

Photos Gint Federas

By John T. Miller

For Acalanes High School girls tennis coach Drew Diefenbach, finishing off this year with a 5-4 loss to Miramonte was tough.

In that loss there were four third-set tie-breakers, including No. 4 singles Ella Morris, who barely lost her match, and a hard-fought win by the No. 2 doubles team of Kayli Harley and Emily Burkowitz, who won in a third tie-breaker.

According to coach Drew Diefenbach, the Dons' season was a matter of "having fun and coming together as a team."

They accomplished that and more with an excellent season, finishing 6-4 in the competitive Foothill Division of the Diablo Athletic League and 9-10 overall.

Diefenbach, in his fourth year at Acalanes, is a Miramonte High School and Saint Mary's College graduate, having played tennis as an undergraduate at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He also earned

a master's in sports psychology from JFK University and runs a program called Paragon Tennis in Orinda.

The team boasted a good amount of returning players, and, with only three seniors graduating and a good JV crew, their prospects look good for next year.

Analese Ruczynski and Martha Burns, both juniors, played the No. 1 and No. 2 singles positions. They are both lefties, presenting some additional problems for opponents.

Kit Scheirer, a sophomore, No. 2 or

No. 3 singles, pulled out a lot of great wins for the team, according to Diefenbach. Senior co-captains Ella Morris played No. 3 or No. 4 singles, with Kayli Harley occupying the No. 1 doubles position.

Diefenbach gives additional credit to Cate Condy, a junior, at the No. 5 singles: "Cate brought special enthusiasm to games and practice, really helping to push the team spirits." He also mentioned Avery Bahl, who rounded out the team as No. 2 doubles. "Avery stepped up as a senior in her first year on varsity and really helped contribute to the team."

In addition to beating DAL rival Miramonte earlier this year, 8-1, Diefenbach points to a nonleague win against a tough Burlingame High opponent, 6-0, as a highlight of the year.

Helping out with the team was volunteer Mike Toni, who is in his fourth year as assistant to Diefenbach, and another special "coach," a stuffed animal sloth named Gilbert, Jr. who attends all the practices and games.

At the JV level, Diefenbach credits coaches Gary Fiammengo and Lee Ann Gove for doing an excellent job. "We're pretty well set up for next year," he says.

Diefenbach is also an aficionado in pickleball, hoping to promote it as a sport for high school athletics.

Lafayette's Donovan Bantique and Tucker Jones on winning team

Submitted by Tim Jones

Lafayette eighth-graders Donovan Bantique and Tucker Jones won the 2021 Adrenaline Santa Barbara Lacrosse Showdown with their West Coast Wolverines team going 5-0 in tournament play.



Photo provided

Lamorinda Karate Athletes return with medals



Karate & Fitness USA team members with Thomas Westernoff on right, not all athletes in photo

Photo provided

Submitted by Thomas Westernoff

Karate & Fitness USA Team members of Lafayette participated in the Yuba City State Karate Championships on Sunday, Oct. 3. A total of 13 athletes from the Lamorinda area returned with 22 medals: 11 Gold, 4 Silver and 7 Bronze. The Karate team competed in Kata (Forms) and Kumite (sparring).

Fall Classic Competition results: 13 Total Athletes, 22 Medals, 11 Gold, 4 Silver and 7 Bronze.

Name	Kata	Kumite
Sophia Hong	Silver	Silver
Jacob Beugelmans	Bronze	Bronze
Collin Beugelmans	Gold	
Miles Paras	Bronze	Gold
Chloe Paras	Gold	
Parsa Shayesteh	Bronze	Gold
Kian Shayesteh		Bronze
Zac Kemp	Gold	Silver
Agnes Swaney	Silver	Bronze
Andrew Cai	Gold	Gold
Polly Ryzhanklva	Gold	Bronze
Alex Paras	Gold	Gold
Ryoma Durkee	Gold	

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