

LAMORINDA SPORTS

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Mats bid sudden farewell to coach, Jack Schram

By Jon Kingdon

One short week after making it to the semifinal CIF state football championship game, Jack Schram, after 18 years as a Miramonte football coach, the last 13 as the head coach, was informed on Dec. 8 that he would no longer be affiliated with the Miramonte football team.

In the press release put out by Miramonte, they "bid a fond farewell to Coach Jack Schram." Principal Ben Campopiano spoke of how Schram's "dedication and leadership have laid a strong foundation for the future of Miramonte football. Winning two NCS Championships and guiding the program so successfully for over a decade

is truly a remarkable coaching achievement."

Schram was not given any specific explanation as to why he was losing his job. "There was no reasoning and they just said that they wanted to go into a different direction with new leadership and that's all they told me," Schram said. "I really wanted to keep coaching at Miramonte. I've already had some offers and I'm still coaching at Miramonte as the school's golf coach. At this point, I don't know what the future holds."

Athletic Director Sean Hennessey could not give any specifics as to what went into the school's decision. "There was no one thing at all or anything

that I could point to," Hennessey said. "It was just that we felt it was time for a change in leadership. We are always getting feedback from the parents and players for all our programs, not just football, and like I said, it was just one of those things where we felt it was time for a new direction within the program."

According to Hennessey it was a decision reached by the whole administrative staff, Campopiano, himself and both associate principals.

Hennessey also acknowledged the success of the team this season: "This doesn't take anything away from what Jack accomplished and the NCS Division 5 cham-

ionship is important. The players did well, and we don't want to stop any of the team's momentum moving forward."

At this point, there is no one under consideration to fill the head coaching position. "We are looking for someone that has a detailed plan and approach to running a program from top to bottom," Hennessey said. "Someone who has a 12-month plan moving forward that includes the weight room and a whole bunch of different things. We have no predetermined thought on whether we will go with an offensive or a defensive coach. We just want the best possible coach to lead Miramonte High School to the next step."

Senior Nick Blair said that the players were informed the same day as Schram about the change. "We were a little surprised as a team, but they made it clear that they had been looking into it for a while," Blair said. "We love all of our coaches and they have been great for us but still we're looking forward to see what a new coach will bring."

Blair spoke highly of his relationship and respect for Schram's coaching acumen: "We always got along. He's a great coach and he always knew what he was talking about. His football knowledge is great and I'm going to miss his game plans and installations. He al-



Photo Ann Murphy

ways came up with fun new plays for us. No one was happy that he's not going to be here, but a new coach will bring a new perspective and we hope that whoever it is will keep the progress that we made this season."

Acalanes football captures its first state championship

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At halftime, the defense also made the appropriate adjustments. "In the first half, we blitzed a lot but in the second half, Coach (David) Ortega simplified things and we went back to basics, and we did not allow their offense to score," McKenzie said.

"Everybody, especially the seniors were really locked in, and it ended up being a really senior led game, especially by (DL) Aiden Yates who came up with two big plays in the second half," WR/CB Trevor Rogers said.

The adjustments worked on both sides of the ball with Acalanes outscor-

ing Birmingham 21-2 in the second half. "We may have been a little jittery and nervous in the first half, not playing to our full potential," WR/CB Paul Kuhner said. "From my perspective in the defensive backfield, I felt like our defensive line was getting to the quarterback so fast, it made my job a lot easier. We were running a cover three zone where we left eight guys in the box to stop the run and just the three of us to stop the pass and it really worked." Kuhner would go on to get the first interception that Tisdell, under pressure, threw this season in the fourth quarter.

Once again, the offense was led by quarterback

Sully Bailey who completed 24 of 37 passes for 296 yards and four touchdowns. "They were playing man coverage and as the game progressed, we spread out to ball more," Rogers said.

There were six different receivers for Acalanes: Rogers-7/146/2 TD Niko White 7/63, Giorgianni 4/46, Kuhner 3/22/1 TD, Henry Souza 2/14/1 TD, Brady Morrow 1/5.

When Birmingham tried covering Rogers with Waters, Rogers went to Burnsed and told him that he could beat him. "I trusted in myself and thought if I was in one-on-one coverage and I got a good pass, I could make the play," Rogers said.

Burnsed was not one to dispute Rogers and put it simply: "Rogers said that he could beat him, and we threw it up to him and he beat the guy and scored."

Once again, the time of possession favored Acalanes' opponent, 29 minutes to 19 minutes. Despite his defense being on the field for so long, it was not a concern for Burnsed: "We have a great strength and conditioning program led by Tim Silvera who does a great job and we felt like we were as fresh in the fourth quarter as we were the first quarter."


With Acalanes up by eight points, they scored once more in the last 30 seconds on a 10-yard pass

to Kuhner. "On that last drive, we ran and forced them to use up their timeouts so on fourth down, only being up by one score, we wanted to score to clinch the win," Burnsed said. "We saw they were playing zero coverage (no safeties) with no one there to take the slant away, so we called for that pattern to Kuhner and with a little fake to the running back, freezing their linebackers, it was wide open."

It was a particularly special play for Kuhner. "Coach Burnsed and my position coach, Coach Blue (Joel Issac), just told me to run away from my man and Sully put it right on me to seal the game," Kuhner

said. "For Coach Blue to tell me that I'm going to catch the pass to seal the game, it showed how much, over my four years at Acalanes, the type of relationship I had formed with my teammates and coaches who were willing to put our biggest game ever on the line, in my hands. That totally meant the world to me."

Always one for understatement, when asked how it felt to hold up the trophy, Burnsed shared the moment: "It's the first time I've been to a state championship. It's pretty nice. For our players, the school, and the community, it's pretty awesome."



Happy Holidays

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