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Undefeated Monte Vista boys lacrosse on national radar

By **MERCURY NEWS** | themerc@bayareanewsgroup.com |
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While its unblemished record is nice, especially considering the quality of opponents it has faced, the Monte Vista boys lacrosse team isn't going for an undefeated season.

"We want to win North Coast," Mustangs coach Joe Rabinowitz said, referring to the section. "Talent-wise, we have the players that it would be a disappointing to not win North Coast."

Monte Vista (13-0, 3-0 East Bay Athletic League) is ranked No. 18 nationally by LaxPower.com anchored by goalie Joe Tabor and attacker Wiley Bonham, both bound for Loyola Maryland. Also integral are UMass commit Devin Spencer and twins Joe and Dominic Piombo.

Along with the 26 other Mustangs, they are "hungry" for the program's fifth NCS championship, Rabinowitz said.

"We just have a whole bunch of guys who are not concerned with what their stats look like. They know accolades will all come with team success," the coach said. "The chemistry on this team is unbelievable."

That has been on display during Monte Vista's mammoth of a schedule, which started with a 17-8 win over two-time defending NCS Division 2 champion Marin Catholic. The Mustangs have dealt Davis and Granite Bay their only losses, and, in all, defeated nine teams that made the postseason last year. They have outscored opponents by nearly 10 goals a game.

"I made an effort to find the best team from every league in the Bay Area and get them on the schedule, and for the most part we have," Rabinowitz said.

That includes an 8-5 victory over St. Ignatius-San Francisco, ranked No. 23 by LaxPower. Monte Vista is the top ranked team from California by that website and is at No. 5 nationally by MaxPreps.com.

Such success comes in the first season under Rabinowitz, a Berkeley High alum who played at Arizona and spent the last four years helming Bishop O'Dowd. His lacrosse experience and youthful energy may help the Mustangs rebound from dropping the NCS Division 1 title game last season — to rival San Ramon Valley, no less.

The Mustangs clash with both the Wolves and fellow EBAL powerhouse De La Salle in the final week of the regular season. Then they'll take a shot at ending a four-year NCS title drought, which ties the program's longest.

"Going undefeated is not important," Rabinowitz said. "We have our sights set on EBAL and North Coast."



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