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Campo Dominates Boys' Volleyball

By Marissa Harnett



Stephen Buhl goes up watched by Yize Dong Photos Ohlen Alexander

a run and captured the remaining eight points almost consecutively to win the set. Campo carried the momentum into the fourth set to seal the win.

With little rest, Campo moved on to the final match against Whitney. The Cougars gave up one set to win in four, 25-17, 22-25, 25-15, 25-21. Campo came out strong in the first set. Set two saw Whitney regroup and defend better, which earned them the set. Campo came back again in the third and grabbed a lead that secured them the set. The fourth set was close.

"We couldn't get much separation from them. It was the big play of Charlie Mattox to come in and serve four consecutive points on two separate occasions as well as contribute three digs in those sequences which helped to secure the win," Chen detailed.

Chen is proud of his players. "All season I've been very hard on them about playing as a team and questioning their toughness and mental stability," he said. "They really found a way to bring it together and play well especially when they weren't playing their best game. That speaks volume of their character."

First, they won the DFAL title. Next, the Campolindo boys' volleyball team took their third straight NCS championship. Finally, on May 25 at Dublin High School, the Cougars captured their sweetest title yet: the first-ever Division II CIF (California Interscholastic Federation) NorCal Regional Championship.

"We're all feeling pretty happy. It's really surreal to pull off the win," said head coach Dave Chen. Campolindo defeated No. 2 Whitney High School, 25-17, 22-25, 25-15, 25-21 in the championship.

With an overall record of 39-2 entering the tournament, Campo earned the No. 1 seed and showed why they deserved the top spot. Chen felt honored by the top seed, but recognized that they were a target.

"The biggest thing for us to stress is that we don't need to be perfect, we just need to be consistent," Chen explained. "The playoff run is a test of consistency in performance, but also emotional control and mental stability."

One of the challenges Campo faced was size. "We are probably the shortest team of all the NorCal qualifiers," Chen said. However, Campo made up for its lack of size with solid, consistent defense.

Campo's road to the finals began May 21 with sweep of No. 8 Sir Francis Drake High School (25-18, 25-18, 25-12). The Cougars immediately took the lead in the first set and never looked back. The second set started better for Drake. They kept it close early tying it at 5-all, but then Campo took charge. In the final set, Campo rarely missed and kept a comfortable 10-point margin for most of the set.

In the semi-finals, Campo faced No. 4 St. Patrick/St. Vincent, which proved more of a challenge. Campo held the lead through most of the first set, but SPSV battled to even the score at 19-19 and managed to close out the set, 25-23. Regaining their stride in set two, the Cougars strung together powerful serves and decisive kills to secure the set, 25-13. SPSV gave them more trouble in the third, keeping the score even deep into the set. At 17-17, Campo went on



Ryan First #7 goes up for the hit.

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