

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campolindo Volleyball Wins NCS

By Marissa Harnett



Photo Andy Scheck

It took more than two grueling hours and five sets, but the No. 1 seeded Campolindo volleyball team overcame Oakland rival No. 2 Bishop O'Dowd to win the NCS Championship. Saturday's match-up marked the second time Campolindo (27-4) has won the title in three years.

Amid the thunderous roar of competing fans, the Cougars came out aggressively, earning two early wins, 25-18 and 25-13.

In the first game, O'Dowd (29-7) captured the coveted early points and a mental edge as Campo senior powerhouse Annie Shurtz's kill attempts were foiled by the Dragons.

Campo head coach John Vuong remarked on the importance of the mental game. "Volleyball is 80 percent mental. You could be a great hitter or passer, but when you let your opponent get into your head, it is hard to focus and be productive," Vuong added, "We have to be poised throughout the game regardless (of) what the outcomes are."

O'Dowd's momentum continued until Campo's first time-out at 5-10. Campo regained their composure and took control after the timeout.

Sophomore Maddie Browning served to win five straight points, evening the score. The teams battled back and forth until senior Rachel Hua stepped up to serve, earning an-

other five points. At game point, O'Dowd's communication broke down. The ball dropped giving Campo the game.

Game two mirrored the first, with a slow start for the Cougars. Junior Natalie Meniktas turned it around with her low, flat serve. Campo earned nine consecutive points to take the lead. Hua served to finish the game, winning eight straight.

Games three and four began similarly with close exchange of points. But mid-way through each game, O'Dowd gained traction and erased Campo's momentum, winning 25-20 and 25-21 to force a fifth game.

Although losing control of the match in the third and fourth games, Campo was not overwhelmed. "We practiced being behind and fighting to catch-up with (the) other team. It was not a surprise with our players," Vuong said.

The team increased their intensity for the deciding game. The Cougars took control from the start and held onto the lead. Shurtz, who Vuong described as "the team backbone," came up with four of her 22 kills in this crucial game.

At 14-8, match point, Campo thought they had won, and were surprised when the ball sailed back over the net. One more point, however, cinched the win, 15-9.

Vuong stressed focus and poise as the major reasons for their success. He also added that serving was important. "Our serving was excellent. It was the key (to) our victory," he said.

Also key was the outstanding overall team effort, led by strong performances from Shurtz, who added three blocks to her 22 kills, sophomore Kelley Wirth, who had 10 kills and eight blocks, and senior Sophie Seiberth who had 39 assists.

Campolindo advanced to the State playoffs as the top seed in CIF State Girls Division III, northern California bracket, and played Shasta High School last night, Nov. 20 (after press deadline). Check our website for update information, www.lamorindaweekly.com. If the Cougars beat Shasta, they will play the next round at home Nov. 24 at 7 p.m.

Acalanes also played in the NCS tournament falling to Sir Francis Drake in round one, 25-16, 25-9, 22-25, 25-16.

Assistant coach Jessica Mall was proud of how well her team played.

"Overall it was a good match. Many girls had what I thought was their best match. Although our opponent was tough the girls battled it out," she said. "We have had a great season."

Miramonte Boys' XC Wins NCS

Submitted by Alison Zamanian



Tyler Hanson beats course record. Photo Isabella Lee

Miramonte had a successful run at the DFAL championships at Hidden Valley Park in Martinez. Senior Tyler Hanson broke the three-mile course record, finishing in 15:18. The varsity boys' team finished third overall and the varsity girls finished fourth.

Both teams advanced to the NCS championships.

Despite the worst conditions in years, Miramonte shined at the NCS championships at Hayward High School. The Nov. 17 races involved warming up in pouring rain, sliding on mud, and falling in puddles.

All of the Miramonte girls performed well against the toughest competition, finishing sixth overall. Acalanes finished first and Campolindo finished fourth.

The boys ran later in the day. Three boys finished in the top 10. Hanson led the way with a third place finish. The top finishes helped secure a first place finish for the boys. Miramonte boys' cross country has not won an NCS Championship since 2001.

Acalanes boys finished second and Campolindo boys finished fourth.

Urban Knight Earns All-Region Honors

Submitted by Rob Garcia



Jenny Bergren Photo provided

Following her stellar sixth place finish at the NCAA Division II West Regional Championships in Academy of Art University's first post season appearance, senior Jenny Bergren, an Orinda native, was recognized by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association as All-Region award winner for cross country in Division II. Bergren was also named PacWest Runner of the Year. Bergren pioneered the ART U

program by being the first Urban Knight to qualify for NCAA Nationals.

"The feeling of making it to Nationals is like none other," Bergren said. "This has been goal of mine for some time so when I found out I had a good cry!"

The recipient of an NCAA All-Region honor for her performance, Bergren headed to the NCAA Division II Cross Country Championships held on Nov. 17 in Joplin, MO.

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