

Miramonte Defeats State Champion Campolindo

By Kevin D. Shallat

The defending women's state volleyball champion Campolindo Cougars hosted the Miramonte Matadors on Thursday, Nov. 8, as the two teams faced off for the second time this year. There was a good sized crowd on hand. However, like the first match-up, the home team lost. Miramonte pulled off a monumental upset as they beat the defending state champions, 3-1.

In the game a month ago, the Cougars won because they had a more balanced offensive attack. In that game Miramonte relied heavily upon outside hitter Juliana Stivanicevic, yet they had trouble getting more people involved. This was not the case Thursday night, as setter Mary Diamantidis played inspiring volleyball where she was able to get many of her teammates involved. "It was a lot of painful repetitions for her, but she really stepped up, I'm so proud of her and the way she's played so far," said Miramonte head coach Andy Jee.

Diamantidis was in the zone while racking up assists to her fellow teammates. One of those recipients was Miramonte outside hitter Kari Johnson. In the first meeting between the two teams, Johnson's highlights were centered around her serving. In this game it was her play above the net which helped elevate her team's performance. Campolindo's duo of Chandler Moore and Anni Isaacs, both outside hitters and middle blockers, had a terrific game defensively. However, with Johnson stepping up her play around the net, Campolindo couldn't account for both Johnson and Stivanicevic.

Perhaps the happiest player on the court was Miramonte's Stivanicevic. Stivanicevic, a transfer from Campolindo, seemed to be having the most fun out on the court, and it seemed to carry over to the other players.

The Matadors were able to get the visiting crowd rocking on a few stellar spikes after a few long relays. As good as Miramonte was in this first game, they won by a mere two points, beating the Cougars 25-23. The Matadors had won a game early in the first matchup, so there was some guarded optimism from the crowd. Diamantidis and the Matadors would continue their assault, as she continued to throw pinpoint assists to outside hitter and middle blocker Kelsey Freeman, middle blocker Haley Sayres, and outside hitter Kelsey Ross.

After Miramonte took the second game 25-23, it was apparent that the match was the Matador's to lose. The Cougars were able to fight back in the third game, as they wouldn't go down without a fight. Campolindo freshman setter Mary Vaccaro did all she could to keep Campolindo in this match. Cougar libero Alessandro Neason kept many rallies going by diving for impressive digs. Campolindo would mount a comeback in the third game and win 28-26, but would eventually lose steam in the fourth game and drop this final game of the match 25-17.

"I really hope we go to state. We may not be the best physical team, but I think we have the most heart, and I think that we can go all the way," said Diamantidis.

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