

Great Defense Can't Save Cougars from Defeat

By Steven Johns



Alex Mangels (21)

Photo Gavin Schlissel

On Wednesday, Jan. 30 the Las Lomas Knights took the pitch against the Campolindo Cougars – a match that helped define the elite teams in the Diablo Foothill Athletic League. After a scoreless first half, the Knights went on to beat the Cougars 2-0 on the cold night.

With a temperature of 43 degrees at the start of the match, the Cougars and the Knights battled back and forth in the first half. With both defenses not backing down, the first 40 minutes demonstrated the great defensive abilities of both teams.

With 21 minutes and 20 seconds left in the first half senior Ryan Kimura made a key block to keep the match tied at 0-0. The Cougars almost took a 1-0 lead when senior Parker Wells had a clear shot at goal with only 2 minutes and 35 seconds left in the first half. The shot went high, and the Knights avoided giving up a goal at the end of the half.

The second half started off much like the first. Good defenses prevailed over the offenses and the score remained 0-0 for a while. With both goalkeepers making save

after save, the game looked to stay tied at 0-0.

The turning point in the game was when the Las Lomas Knights had a corner kick with 26 minutes and 30 seconds left in the game. A quick pass and a beautiful shot put the Knights on top 1-0.

From this point on the Knights dominated the rest of the game. The Cougar offense could not get anything going and the Las Lomas offense could not be stopped. After another terrific goal the match was all but over with only 9 minutes left.

While the Knights played very well, they had a distinct advantage. The Cougars were missing six starters. Five of the six missing players were singing in a school choir concert. Of the five in choir included the starting goalkeeper Noel Raine, who has had seven shutouts this season. Even more crippling than the five choir members was the absence of the team's leading scorer, senior Georgio Tavecchio. Tavecchio is out with an injured knee.

"We played well with what we had"

stated senior Philip Choy. "Having three other players besides the 11 on the field for a game does not give you very many options." By the end of the game the starters were beginning to become tired, but had to continue due to the lack of substitutes.

This big victory for Las Lomas gives them a chance to finish first in DFAL. Now they find themselves only 2.5 games behind the Miramonte Matadors. With three games left the Knights have a slight chance to reach first.

The Cougars are also 2.5 games back with three games left but are in fourth in DFAL. To finish first the Cougars would need some help from the three teams ahead of them.

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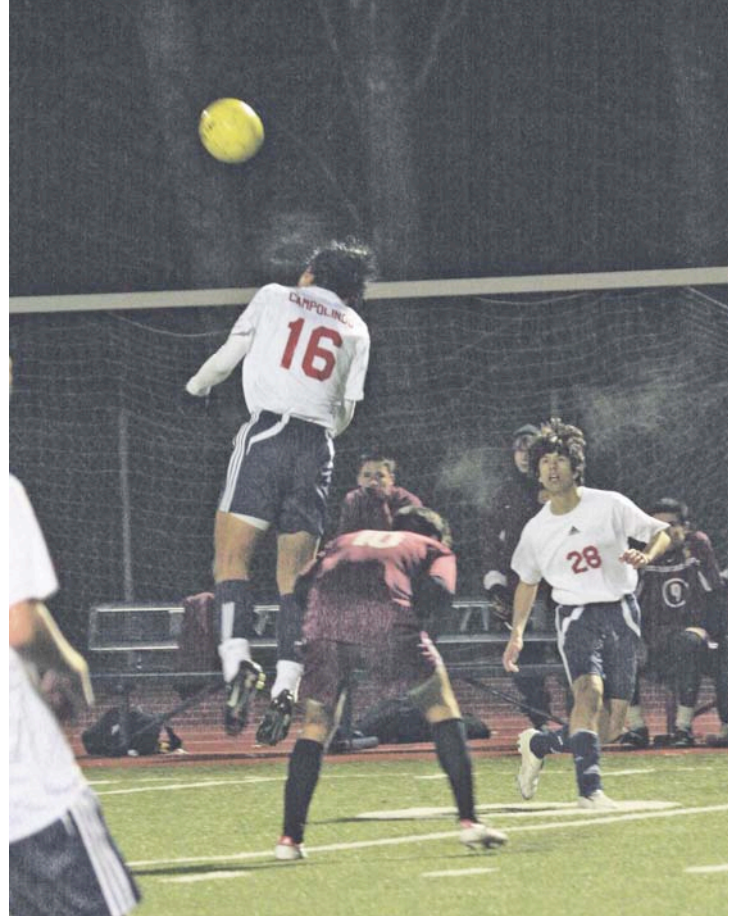


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Jason Kimura (19)

Photo Gavin Schlissel



Alika Okamitsu (16), Angelo Braun (28)

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