

Published May 27th, 2009

Cougars Fight but Fall to Top Seeded Northgate

By Alex Crook





Dylan Blackstone (18) goes for the kill Photo Doug Kohen

As the lone Lamorinda contender in the NCS Boys' Volleyball competition, the Campolindo Cougars rode into Walnut Creek on May 14 with high hopes of upsetting division 2 top seed Northgate. For a high school volleyball game, the atmosphere was intense, seeing the gym half full for this NCS match.

— The Broncos came out of the gate hitting everything, which was too much for the Cougars who gave up the first two points. Northgate jumped out to an 8-2 lead in Game 1 before Campo called the game's first timeout. The Cougars called time twice in Game 1 to try and shift the momentum, with the second one coming after one of many kills from Bronco's senior hitter Jeremy Kong. Campo regained hope with points from co-captain Jake Partlow and sophomore Carl King, but it wasn't enough as Northgate took Game 1, 25-13.

— The second game served as a wake-up call for Campolindo, who forced a Northgate timeout after jumping out to a 4-1 Cougar lead. Campo continued to rule with a 9-3 lead after several players recorded kills to give Campo some breathing room. Northgate eventually woke up, but their alarm went off too late as Campo evened the score at 1 with a 25-16 win in Game 2.

— Game 3 was still Campo's with junior setter Scott Standring tallying the game's first 3 points. Following Dylan Blackstone's beautiful kill for the Cougars, the two teams maintained a long rally before Northgate worked their way to the point. It was close, but Campo took Game 3 as well, 25-22.

— The fourth game alternated points, including the match's first ace from Bronco senior Kevin Woods. Campo trailed late, but their fans still felt an upset was possible. The Broncos however marched to the end and finished out to force a fifth game, 25-22.

— In the tiebreaker, the energy was felt all around the gym from both benches to the stands. The score bounced back and forth, and both squads held their own, but Campo finally gave in at the wrong time. From a 12-11 lead, they saw themselves behind 14-13 at game point. On the final rally, Northgate served, and a bunch of blue jerseys anxiously struggled to cross the ball over the net. The ball finally became tangled in mesh, and the match was over.

— Bronco players "stampeded" the court as Standring lay motionless, face down in disappointment. It was a hard fought game, and either team could have had the win. Northgate went on to win the division, defeating Las Lomas in straight games on May 16th.

— The young Campolindo team, which graduates only two seniors this year (Partlow and Scott Fournier) played a good season, finishing 20-8 overall. Partlow, Standring and junior Zach Dashner took roster spots on the DFAL all-league team. Look for Standring and Dashner, along with sophomores Blackstone and Alex

Mangles and junior Teddy Geoghegan to keep up the momentum next spring.





Jake Partlow (2) Photo Doug Kohen

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