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## Campolindo No. 2 Seed in NorCal Playoffs

By Karl Buscheck



Austin Clarke (24) and Chris Hansen (44)

Photo Gint Federas

Campolindo is headed back to the Northern California Division III regional playoffs and the team has some unfinished business.

The squad will be looking to avenge an overtime loss in the NorCal semifinals a season ago and an overtime exit in the finals the year before that.

"They've been on the cusp," said head coach Matt Watson. "Some of these kids have been on varsity since sophomore year. So, they kind of know what this is all about and what all this means. So, they're pretty focused right now."

The Cougars landed the No. 2 seed in this year's edition of the tournament and will have a bye in the opening round of the playoffs. Campolindo will take the floor on March 14 when the team will host the winner of the No. 7 Sacred Heart Cathedral and No. 10 Vanden game.

Campolindo enters the NorCals after losing to Bishop O'Dowd in the NCS semifinals 70-48 on March 4 at Laney College.

"We got the shots that we wanted to. We got good looks and all that, the ball just didn't go in the basket," said Watson of the Cougars' showing against the Oakland powerhouse that checks in as the No. 2 team in the state and the No. 11 team in the nation, per MaxPreps.com. "Some nights the ball goes in the basket and some nights it doesn't."

Senior Chris Hansen, whom Watson described as a "workhorse," led the Cougars with 13 points, while junior Austin Clarke chipped in 10. Before

bowing out to the Dragons, Campolindo had stormed through the opening two rounds of NCS.

On Feb. 24, the team topped De Anza 83-55 at home to begin its playoff run after securing the top spot in DFAL with a perfect 12-0 regular season. On Feb. 27, Campolindo beat Albany 65-50 at in Moraga.

With the NCS playoffs now in the rear-view mirror and the NorCals looming, Watson likes the way his team is continuing to battle.

"I feel like the guys are doing a great job because there's quite a few bumps and bruises, but none of them are complaining about it and all of them are ready to go to work when they show up in the gym every day for practice."

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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