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## Three-peat!

By Karl Buscheck



Ryan First

The Campolindo boys' volleyball team claimed its third consecutive CIF NorCal Division II title, topping Rio Americano 3-0 on May 30 at Dublin High.

"It's an absolutely huge accomplishment for the team and especially the seniors," head coach David Chen said of his team that smashed past the competition in both the NorCal tournament and the NCS playoffs. "It's always huge to go through playoffs playing strong and confident," said Chen.

The key for the Cougars playoff success was that it was a true team effort. "We've had equal contributions from all players and all players have definitely stepped up for us at different points during the season," Chen said. "All these guys can be the go-to guy on any other team, but here for us we need them to be role players and all play equal balanced parts to keep the offense and defense diverse."

In the title game, the stars of the show were seniors Ryan First and Michael Standing along with sophomore Gage Worsley. First set the pace with a team-leading 11 kills, while Standing checked in with eight and Worsley pitched in seven.

After securing the No. 1 seed in the NorCal bracket, Campolindo made quick work of the opposition on its way to winning the title. In the opening round on May 26, the Cougars cruised past Berean Christian 3-0. Two days later, the Cougars handled Ponderosa 3-1 in the regional semifinals before facing Rio Americano in the finals.

Before the team's NorCal run, the Cougars, who topped the DFAL standings with a perfect 10-0 league record, added a fifth consecutive NCS banner to the program's collection.

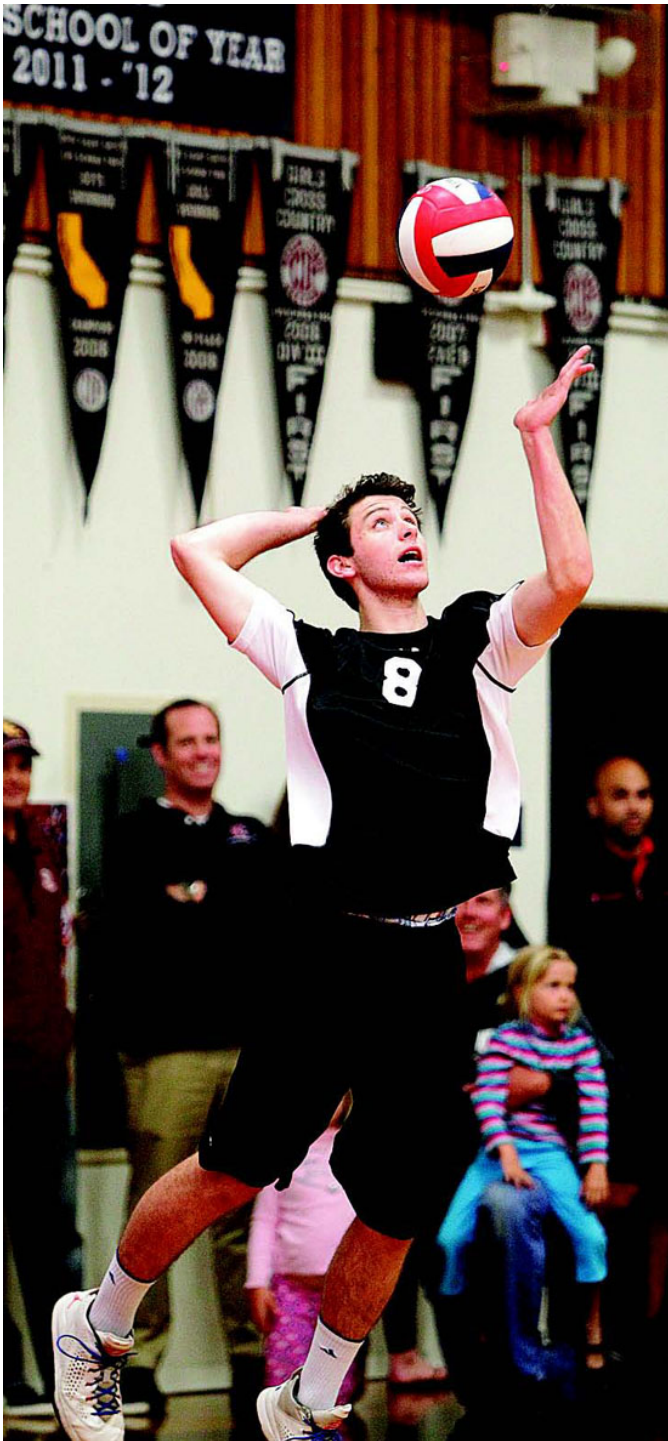
"The guys have won NCS all four years they've been here and it's great to see them accomplish this for the school," Chen said.

The march to the latest NCS title began with a 3-1 win over Alhambra on May 15. Four days later, the Cougars knocked off Northgate 3-0. That win set up the team's 3-0 win over DFAL rival Las Lomas in the NCS championship on May 22.

While Campolindo never lost more than a single game against a given opponent during its six playoff clashes, the journey to the top was not without its obstacles. As Chen explained, just staying healthy was the biggest hurdle that the team faced.

"These unexpected challenges have definitely made this playoff run more challenging yet more rewarding," Chen said. "We've had to restructure our starting line up three times in the past week and I can't say enough about the maturity and the leadership this team has shown in order to

overcome and push through these bumps in the road in order to defend their NorCal title."



Michael Standring Photos Gint Federas

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

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