

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campolindo Football Documentary to Debut at California Independent Film Festival

By Spencer Silva



2011 Campolindo team celebrates NCS Championship

Campolindo Head Coach Kevin Macy likes to talk about the improbability of success in a sport like football, where some teams, simply put, are bigger, faster and stronger than others. “There are no Cinderella stories in football, just Campo,” he says often.

In his view, a small community like Moraga shouldn’t be capable of producing winning football team after

winning football team. But it does. This is the subject of the new film “Banners in the Sky,” which is set to debut at 5 p.m. Sept. 12 at the Rheem Theatre as part of the California Independent Film Festival.

In 2011, local football pundits wrote off the Cougars. In fact, they were expected to finish last in the DFAL. As usual, Coach Macy downplayed his team’s chances, keeping

his hand close to the vest. To the surprise of everyone, they went undefeated in league, won the NCS Division III title and made it all the way to state championship game, which they lost.

The film attempts to explain the success of a team that, theoretically, shouldn’t have the talent or resources to compete year to year. The film brings the viewer along for the 2011

season, through early-season victories at El Cerrito and Miramonte, and then, in the playoffs, Bishop O’Dowd and Marin Catholic, a team notably led by starting Cal quarterback Jared Goff.

Coincidentally, Macy’s Cinderella talk was from the summer of 2014, when the film was shot. At the time, he was unaware his 2014 squad would best its predecessor by completing a perfect 16-0 season and notch its first Division III state title – in last-minute, thrilling fashion, no less. “We never thought we’d go to state,” Macy offered.

Alexander Leis, a recent graduate of Binghamton University, is the film’s director. The film is his debut. Leis, a New York native, was already something of a Campo football fan before he took on the project. His cousin, Campo Assistant Coach Matt Keeperman, sent him links to watch their games in 2011 and later suggested he make a documentary. Leis received a Young Artists’ fellowship to complete the project.

In Leis’s view, it’s the program’s culture that sets it apart. Jerseys don similar last names year to year; players pass the torch from generation to generation, brother to brother. For this reason, Macy’s biggest goal every season is to play on Thanksgiving, when all

his former players can populate the sidelines. As a side benefit, it also means they’ve made the playoffs.

“We never talk about record,” Macy said. “Our only goal is to make it to Thanksgiving, as a service to our former players.”

In 2014, Leis continued to watch Campo from afar. Then after the state semi-final game he got a phone call.

“The best part of it was the Sutter game, when they were down, and I had to go to sleep,” he explained. “I got a call from my cousin, it was like two in the morning ... and he’s just like, ‘here’s the hotel information, book it, I’ll see you next week.’ I woke up to that.”

Leis was on the sideline filming when the Cougars upset El Capitan last December to clinch the state championship. “It was the best football game I’ve ever been to by far.”

At the team’s request, Leis made a follow-up film about the 2014 team, which will (likely) be available for purchase at the “Banners in the Sky” premier. Coach Macy acknowledges that Leis is something of a good luck charm. “We gotta keep him doing documentaries.”

Tickets are available online at caiff.org; the premier is expected to draw a large crowd.

Twin Goalies ‘Tagg Team’ Club Sports, Now College

By Emily Dugdale



Madison and Spencer Tagg

Photo provided

Few people have a twin sibling. Even fewer have a twin sibling who is also an elite athlete. For Madison and Spencer Tagg, it’s a well-earned reality. The twin goalies and recent Campolindo grads will head to Cal this fall to play for one of the nation’s best collegiate water polo programs.

The lanky, tanned twins may look like typical California 17-year-olds, but their sun-bleached hair attests to long hours spent in the pool, hours that have turned them into some of the most powerful forces in the cage. Yet out of the water, they’re just like any teenager about to leave the comforts of home – energetic, slightly awkward, and ready for the excitement of college.

After a friend introduced her to the sport in sixth grade, Madison quickly fell in love with water polo, and by high school she had dedicated herself to the sport. Her brother, Spencer, followed suit in eighth grade after seeing how successful she had become. Both preferred goalie to field positions, a preference found individually when they were rotated into goal during a typical practice drill.

“I still remember to this day – my coach said, we don’t have a goalie so

let’s rotate in. I made some really good blocks, and he was like, ‘Well, we have a goalie here,’” Madison said.

Spencer, who disliked the rough nature of field positions, described a similar experience with his team. “And then they saw how big my dad was, and they were like, yep – goalie material.” Spencer, now 6 feet 5 inches, barely towers over his 6-foot twin sister.

They’ve taken home NCS titles at Campolindo and led their club team, the 680 Drivers, to unprecedented success over the years.

Recently, the Driver men turned in a sixth place finish at the Junior Olympics, a performance Spencer marked as one of the team’s best.

“[Spencer is] a big game player that works as hard if not harder than every guy in the pool,” said 680 boys 18U Head Coach Miles Price. “I can easily say he’s the best goalie I’ve ever coached.”

The Lady Drivers netted first place at the JO’s and, to Madison’s surprise, she clinched MVP honors. When Madison’s name was called, her team members swarmed around to congratulate her.

“I was really surprised when they

called my name. I was like, uh, I didn’t make that many blocks in the championship game!” Madison said, laughing. “But I liked how my teammates backed me up – they’re really supportive.”

Driver’s Head Coach Jessica Cima called Madison the “backbone” of the team.

During the summer, the Taggs also swim for Orinda Park Pool in the OMPA summer league. At the OMPA Championship Meet this month, the twins garnered a bundle of top finishes. Spencer was the meet’s third highest individual points recipient in the boys 15-18 age group with 66 points and a win in the 50 fly. Madison came in second place in individual points with 64 points, and her 15-18 medley relay broke a meet record from 2004.

“I thought the scoreboard was broken!” Madison said of her relay’s record. “We just wanted to win.”

The pair did not compete at the recent Contra Costa County Meet, citing busy schedules in preparation for the upcoming college school year. Spencer is underway with Cal’s “Hell Week,” doing two-a-day practices in preparation for the beginning of Cal men’s water polo season.

Two top athletes living under one roof might provoke intense sibling rivalry, but their coaches mostly disagree.

“Madison and Spencer have this sort of constant support for each other, and the fact that they play the same position and yet they’re still so happy for each other when they do well is really special,” Cimas said of the twins. “It’s just pure support.”

“His sister still throws better outlet passes than him, though!” said Price.

All eyes are now turned toward how these siblings will stack up in their next big life challenge: college.

The support of the surrounding community made a big difference when considering which college to attend this fall, they both agree. “There were a lot of parents who came up to me and congratulated me on Cal,” Spencer said. “They said, ‘you’ll love it there.’”

“I think college is going to be great for them,” Coach Cimas said. “Who knows what’s going to happen for Cal Water Polo in the next few years?”

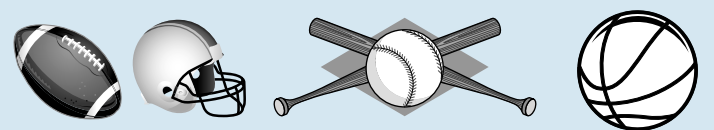
The pair seemed excited and nervous to start their freshman year at Cal, not only a top-ranked water polo powerhouse but also a prestigious academic institution.

“People are telling me you have to be really prepared to balance school and water polo,” Madison ex-

plained. “I’m prepared for it, but I also feel like once I get there I’m going to have to sit down and just study so hard to stay on top.”

It’s fair to say that based on their reputation in this town, these twins won’t do anything less than hit the ground running.

Youth Sports Registration



Lamorinda Lacrosse Club

Registration open now for boys and girls fall clinics held Sunday afternoons from September to November Registration for regular spring season will begin on September 15th. Please go to www.lamorindalacrosse.com for more information and details. Contact Jin Peavey at lamorindalaxops@gmail.com if you have any questions.



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