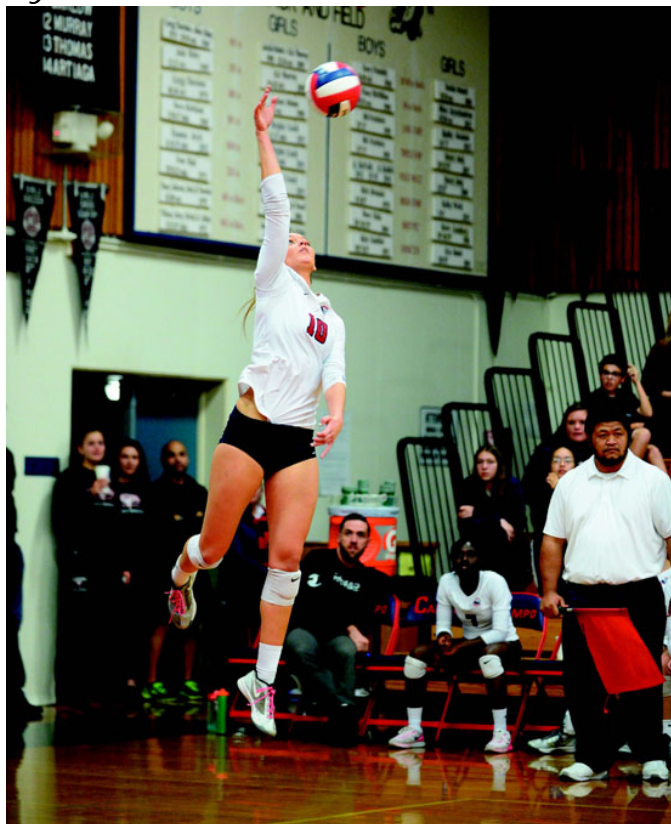


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## Campolindo and Acalanes Girls' Volleyball Teams Set to Meet in NCS Semifinal

By Karl Buscheck



Kristen Sibley Photo Jimmy Pak

The Campolindo and Acalanes girls' volleyball teams are headed for a showdown in the NCS Division III semifinals after both squads advanced through the opening rounds of the tournament.

Campo, who snagged the DFAL title by turning in a perfect 12-0 record in league play, earned a bye in the opening round of NCS before smashing past Albany (No. 8 seed) 25-19, 25-22, 25-16 on Nov. 14 in the quarterfinals in Moraga.

Junior middle hitter Sabrina Smith has been the biggest star for the top-seeded Lady Cougars, but the key to the team's success is that everyone on the roster has been chipping in.

"We have a pretty well-rounded team and everybody has really stepped up this year," head coach John Vuong said after Campo took down Albany. "And that's why, when you see the (news) paper, we don't have dominant players who get like 20 kills a night."

Before Saturday's match, Vuong and co-head coach Dave Chen were awarded the NCS Honor Coach Award.

As the Lady Cougars continue to pile up decisive wins, Vuong can't help but notice that his team just keeps getting stronger.

"They're improving at the right time," Vuong said. "So, I think we're on the right track of continuing to improve as a team."

Acalanes will be aiming to knock their local rivals off that track after landing in second place in the DFAL standings and earning the No. 4 seed in the postseason.

"Our goal is an NCS title," head coach Todd Travis said. "We're trying to win one. Obviously, one match at a time."

On the path to the semifinals, the Lady Dons have already topped the reigning NCS champions, beating the No. 5 seed Sonoma Valley 25-20, 25-21, 25-13 in Lafayette on Nov. 14.

"They're the NCS champs from a year ago," Travis said. "They've been at the highest level."

In the opening round of the playoffs, Acalanes cruised past the No. 13 seed Moreau Catholic by a score of 24-14, 25-16, 25-18 at home.

Sophomore setter Maddie Kalil, junior outside hitter Parker Jones and senior middle blocker Mimi White have led the way for the Lady Dons, but like Campo, Acalanes will be relying on its entire squad to keep on advancing.

"Our depth is great. We've got 17 girls suiting up for us," Travis said. "We had one of our senior captains go down against Moreau and we didn't miss a beat. We still beat them in three - pretty soundly."

While Campo and Acalanes continue to roll along, Miramonte bowed out of NCS in the quarterfinals. On Nov. 14, the No. 7 seed Lady Mats lost 25-15, 25-17, 25-17 to the No. 2 seed Bishop O'Dowd.

"This team was a very close group and played with great chemistry," head coach Lisa Bachtold

said. "Although we would have liked to go further it was great to host a home match during the first round against Petaluma."

In the opening round of NCS, the Lady Mats made quick work of the No. 10 seed Petaluma, winning 25-23, 25-11, 25-16.

"Our fans were a big part of our success this season and playing at home was definitely an advantage for us."

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[back](#)

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