

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campo Football Wins Third Consecutive NCS Title, Advances to State Championship

By Karl Buscheck



An ecstatic Cougar football team will return to the State title game.

Photos Gint Federas

Back in the middle of September, when the Campolindo football team was sitting at 2-2, head coach Kevin Macy never could have imagined that the Cougars were on the way to an NCS trifecta and a state championship appearance.

"We never thought we'd get to this point," admitted Macy, whose Cougars will face Bakersfield Christian in the CIF State Division 4-AA Championship on Dec. 17 in Bakersfield. "We had so many injuries early in the year (and to) some of our better kids."

The injuries began to mount – even before the Cougars lost to San Jose-powerhouse Valley Christian, 21-7, on Aug. 26 in the first game of the season.

"Chris Brahney broke his ankle. He's our heart and soul kid," Macy said of the junior lineman. "That happened in our intrasquad scrimmage."

The Cougars lost four more players during the defeat to Valley Christian.

"At that point, we're going, 'We're not going to make it through the season,'" Macy recalled.

Playing in the NCS Division 2 bracket for the first time, Campolindo overcame the injuries and found a way. Brahney was one of the Cougars who returned to the field during the team's run to a third consecutive NCS title, which concluded when the team dismantled Windsor, 40-20, at DVC on Dec. 2.

"They did it all through determination more than anything else," Macy said. "So, I think this (NCS title) stands out pretty highly in terms of the others ones just because all the limitations that this team had going into the year and throughout the year."

Throughout the season, the right arm of Jacob Westphal – the

team's senior quarterback – has been the primary reason why the team has advanced as far as it has. Against Windsor, Westphal threw for 289 yards (20-for-36) while slinging four touchdowns. Junior wide receiver John Torchio added on a 53-yard strike.

"Our receivers have been pretty solid all year," Marcy said. "So we count on them."

Against Windsor, seniors Lev Garcia and Raymond Berzins along with junior Vincent Mossotti all caught touchdowns. Torchio hauled in a pair.

The Cougars also received an unexpected boost from the stable of running backs – even with the team sporting a makeshift offensive line.

"We didn't think we were going to have much success running the ball. It hasn't been a strength of ours. But Matthew Ringquist, who's a solid receiver, he had a great game running the ball," Macy said of the senior who led the way with 75 yards. "And (junior) Shun Ishida has helped, giving us somebody else who can carry the ball in the playoffs."

Facing off against Palma at Rabobank Stadium in Salinas on Dec. 9, the Cougars won 30-21 to claim the NorCal Division 4-AA Championship.

In Campolindo's second state bowl appearance in as many seasons, Westphal went for 402 yards (29-for-42), connecting on touchdowns to Garcia and senior Kannah Cruickshank. Senior running back Branden Boboco added a touchdown on the ground on a night when the Cougars overcame four turnovers to secure the win.

"Oh, no doubt we feel proud about it," Macy said about making back-to-back bowl trips. "And I don't think it's (like) we didn't think we could do it. At

this point we're just thinking, 'How long can we endure?'"

The victory over Palma gave Campo an 11-3 record, marking the team's 14th game of the year after playing 16 in 2015 and 16 the season before that.

"It's more than 16 games on our bodies when you think about it because we don't have depth, we don't have size, we don't have backups," Macy said. "So, really, for us, a 16-game season is more like a 24-game season on our bodies compared to the big schools with big kids and depth."

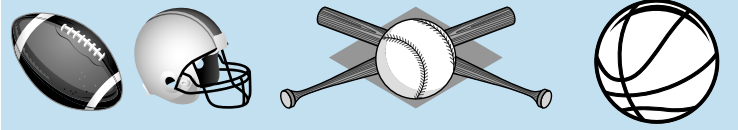
Now, the showdown with Bakersfield is the lone remaining game on the Cougars' schedule.

"We're proud," Macy said. "We're excited that we now have a legacy of going to state games."



John Torchio

Youth Sports Registration



Lamorinda Rugby Football Club



On-line Registration opens Oct 1st for the 2016 rugby season! Season runs December through March for youth, and through April for High School. Teams for girls and guys ages 6-19. No prior rugby experience necessary. Practices are located at the Wilder Fields in Orinda.

Find out more about our team and how to register online at www.lamorugby.com. For questions, contact Doug Pearson at dpearson@lee-associates.com.

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