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Campolindo loses to Bishop O'Dowd

By Jon Kingdon



Charlie Craig Photos Gint Federas

In a game where Campolindo needed to play a mistake-free game Dec. 1 and didn't, the Cougars lost to Bishop O'Dowd by a score of 35-14.

Coming into the NCS semifinal game with identical 10-2 records, the 3rd seeded Campolindo Cougars and the 2nd seeded Bishop O'Dowd Dragons seemed to be very evenly matched - Campolindo won their two prior playoff games by scores of 35-6 (vs. Redwood) and 49-14 (vs. Ukiah) while O'Dowd won their games by scores of 35-7 (vs. Hayward) and 49-14 (vs. Benicia). Both teams played Hayward earlier in the season, with Campolindo winning by 27 points and O'Dowd winning by 28 points.

Campolindo dug themselves a big hole early in the game with a fumble and interception on their first two possessions deep in their own territory, which O'Dowd converted into touchdowns, jumping to a quick 14-0 lead. Brandon Manty scored on a 32-yard fumble return for Campolindo, cutting the deficit in half, but O'Dowd answered that with a five-minute drive to go ahead 21-7 at the end of the first half.

After Campolindo stopped O'Dowd on their first drive, forcing a punt, the Cougars were anticipating getting the ball in good field position. However, there was a roughing the kicker penalty on Charlie Craig that allowed O'Dowd to keep the ball and finish off the drive with a touchdown to go ahead 28-7. With the score 35-7, Campolindo quarterback Grant Harper connected on a 60-yard touchdown to Max Schoenberger to make the final score 35-14.

Field position, long a strength for Campolindo, was very much in O'Dowd's favor. Campolindo averaged starting their drive on the 24-yard line while O'Dowd's starting average was the 44-yard line. Though the game was played under a sunny sky, the wind seemed to be a factor for Harper. Finishing the year with a 60 percent completion rate, against O'Dowd, Harper was only 11 for 33 for 199 yards. Still, Harper walked off the field with

his head held high: "I loved playing with every one of our seniors. We fought together all year long. It is disappointing but we never gave up and that was our identity."

Campolindo finished the season with a 10-3 record, the eighth straight year the Cougars had at least 10 wins. Macy praised the performance and attitude of his team: "We contained their top back, Austin Jones, never allowing him any big runs. We played hard and we have nothing to be ashamed about. We never gave up. We gave a great effort every play. Our seniors advanced tremendously as a group and as individuals. It was an incredible year."



Grant Harper

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