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Campo a casualty after CIF cancels remainder of state basketball championships



Photos Gint Fedaras

By Jon Kingdon

Campolindo defeated De La Salle High School 54-49 on Tuesday, March 10, to claim back-to-back NorCal titles in what they felt was the final steppingstone to make it to the state championships in Sacramento. Just two days later, however, head coach Steven Dyer heard officially on a conference call that due to the coronavirus, all the championship games for the men and women were canceled. With that the Campolindo boy's basketball team, preparing to play Ribet Academy, saw their season end, not with a bang but a whimper.

It was not an easy decision for Dyer and his team to accept: "I texted the guys as

soon as I found out and then we had a lunchtime meeting and a team dinner on Thursday. It was a very emotional and heartbreaking for us to get as far as we did and then have the 'what if's' out there. It was particularly tough for Carter Mahaney and Rex Curtis who won't ever get to play together with their brothers along with our other two seniors, Tyler Smith and Peter O'Donnell."

As the seventh seed in Division I, Campolindo had a particularly different schedule in the playoffs but ended up defeating the second, third and fourth seeds (Capital Christian, Salesian Prep and De La Salle), making it to the state championship game. "It was a crazy run at the end of

the season," said Dyer. "It's something that we are proud of, beating three elite teams and all of them on the road which makes it all the more impressive."

Campolindo was ahead by 18 points in the middle of the third quarter against De La Salle when their offense went cold, and De La Salle reduced the margin to three points several times in the fourth quarter but could not get any closer.

It was having such a difficult regular season schedule that put Campolindo in a position to handle the adversity they confronted against De La Salle, said Dyer: "There was not a situation that we hadn't been in during the season. For example, the first time



Carter Mahaney

that we played Salesian during the season, we were up by 14 at the half when we blew the lead and lost by five points. Then after being up by 18 in the middle of the third quarter against De La Salle, and though we didn't play great, we didn't blow the lead and ended up winning. Just having all that experience, playing against great teams and having close games only helped at this point of the year."

Aidan Mahaney, Campolindo's leading scorer who was constantly double teamed, was held to only nine points but put in four straight

foul shots at the end to insure the victory. The Cougars were led by Emmanuel Callas with 18 points followed by Carter Mahaney with 15 points.

"Aidan had a great game on both ends," said Dyer. "He didn't force the ball offensively and he guarded De La Salle's leading scorer Chris Bunch and held him to four points. It was an outstanding effort on both ends and that is why he is a great player because when he gets double teamed, he'll let the other guys carry the load on offense and the other guys did."

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