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Campolindo girls come up short in NCS Championship

By Jon Kingdon

With an offense that was averaging 15.6 goals per game and a defense that was holding their opponents to six goals per game, the defense had their usual solid performance, but the Campolindo girls lacrosse offense never got into a rhythm and the team lost to Marin Academy in the North Coast Section championship by a score of 6-4.

"This wasn't our best game," Campolindo head coach Devin Combe said. "On offense, we weren't passing the ball as cleanly as we usually do. A lot of passes were low and turned into ground balls and they were beating us pretty cleanly on the ground ball game. We had good patience and we weren't forcing it but anytime it came down to us driving in, they were very quick to slide and made good double teams. We were prepared for that but any feed out of it was just a locked up, low ball that wasn't easy for us to catch and that really threw off our offense."

Sophomore attacker Molly Stephens agreed with Combe's analysis: "They were playing really good team defense and were able to lock up on us at the end and we could not get into a settled offense, but we'll be back next year."

Senior midfielder and co-captain, Annie Cimperman, did not allow the loss to dampen her feeling about her career at Campolindo: "Just coming to practice every day has been the most fun experience and it was always the favorite part of my day. In the end, it didn't matter if we won or lost because I'm not going to remember that in the future. It's just how we were together and I'm really happy I was a part of such a great team."

In the semifinal game, San Marin tied the game 10-10 with three consecutive goals with seven minutes left in the game. Senior co-captain Laurel Hunter explained how focused the team got at that point: "We talked about the things that we wanted to happen and how we did not want this to be our last seven minutes of the season and we would simply not lose this game."

Sophomore goalie Haley Richards was a little nervous herself but made it a point to get the team to relax: "I brought everybody in, and they were all talking at once, so I said, 'Guys, let's breathe in and breathe out and when we all did that, it really helped us. After that, we talked about what we were doing well, but acknowledging what we needed to do to make it better.'"

The Cougars then scored six of the next seven goals to make the final score 16-11.

The dominant defensive play carried over to the championship game. "Haley's saves in goal were in the double digits and our defense did a great job in preventing a lot of their drives," Combe said. "They are a fast team that scores a lot in transition, and we kept their transition goals down to one."

For Combe, despite the loss, it was still a very successful season that was far more challenging than anyone had anticipated: "I told them it was important for them to take the time to think about the entire journey and everything they went through. We won a lot of games and cried a lot of tears with the loss of two lives in our community. There was a lot of heartbreak and lot of open and honest conversations with each other. Overcoming that and learning about the bigger picture which is life, and being able to use sports to create support systems and work out some of those bigger battles with their teammates was an important experience for them and for them to remember what they went through this season and what a huge accomplishment it was to get to this championship."

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