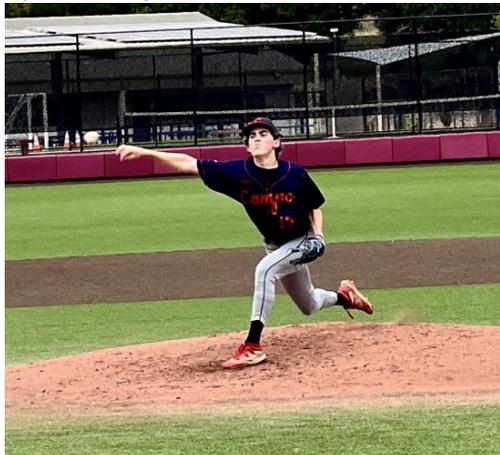


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## Campolindo loses championship game 2-1 to Cardinal Newman

By Jon Kingdon



Graham Schlicht pitching against Cardinal Newman Photo Jon Kingdon

When Campolindo defeated Redwood Christian High School in the semifinal game of the North Coast Section Baseball Championship, there were not a lot of people outside of Lamorinda that gave the Cougars, ranked 116th in the state much hope in the championship game against Cardinal Newman (25-1), ranked 6th in the state and 22nd nationally.

The Cougars (18-8-1) approached the game as they had done all season, winning their prior eight games. It was the philosophy that head coach Julian Fiammengo brought to Campolindo that enabled the team to go toe to toe with a team like Cardinal Newman and come within two outs of winning the championship: "It was the little details and the focus intensity that were needed if we wanted to compete on a daily basis. We got our players to 'engage with every pitch,' taking things slow, keeping the game slow and worrying about each pitch as it came in. It had been one pitch at a time, one inning at a time and one game at a time."

With freshman Graham Schlicht on the mound for Campolindo and Landon Rota for Cardinal Newman, it was a scoreless game going into the sixth inning. At the top of the inning, Hideki Prather was hit by a pitch and then was forced out at second on a ground out by Greg Palamountain. Miles Clayton then hit a double to drive in Palamountain putting Campolindo ahead 1-0 but was thrown out trying to stretch his hit into a triple.

The lead held up until the bottom of the seventh. Sam Valenti started the inning for Cardinal Newman with a single. After an out and then a double by Justice Brinson, there were men on second and third and Schlicht was relieved by Hudson Pergamit. An infield single tied the game and a bunt down the first base line drove in the winning run, for a heartbreaking 2-1 loss for the Cougars.

Schlicht's performance was a great capstone to a dominating year. "It's really insane that a freshman can be mentally ready and dominate against a team that had only lost one game this year," pitching coach Gavin Shipp said. "After walking a couple of men early in the game, Graham just locked in, and it was all strikes from there on out and it was impressive to see him bounce back. It was a tough way to lose but Graham did an excellent job."

It was not an easy loss for Fiammengo to accept. "We competed and gave ourselves a chance to win and we shouldn't have anything to hang our heads about," Fiammengo said. "We were right there and couldn't get it done and that's how the game and life go sometimes. We were three outs away and we couldn't get it done. You know the toughest three outs to get are the last three outs and that was shown today."

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[back](#)

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