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Campolindo Volleyball Falls in NCS Semifinals

Alex Kozela



Annie Shurtz (14) led the Cougars in kills this season Photo Doug Kohen

"We accomplished so much [this season]," she said. "I remember at the beginning of the season, people were saying this was our rebuilding year, but we stepped it up and showed them that we were a good team and we went far, so much farther than I expected."

The Cougars defeated Petaluma, 3-0, in the first round of the playoffs to advance to the semi finals. Local rivals Miramonte also had a spot in the playoffs but fell in the first round, losing 3-1 to Sonoma Valley.

A year after winning the state title, Campolindo's girls' volleyball team has been ousted from the NCS Division III playoffs. The Cougars lost to Albany 3-1 last Wednesday, November 16 in the semifinals.

The Cougars (20-11) started out strong, winning an energetic first set 25-21, but Albany (32-6) slowly but steadily gained control of the match. Albany took the next three sets in a row, 25-14, 25-19, and 25-17, to seal a berth in the final against Drake.

"I just think we didn't find the consistency we needed for this match," Campolindo head coach Scott Bishop said after the game. "The girls really worked hard and put a lot of effort into training for this part of the season, and, hey, any given night anybody can win and you've got to bring your best game."

Bishop was quick to point out the strengths of Albany's team, led by Kariana Castanon-Hill (13 kills, six block assists) and McKenzie Giblin (31 assists).

"They are a really athletic team, they did a great job blocking tonight, and they have enough ball control to use their middles and their outsides, so they did a great job tonight," Bishop said.

Despite the loss, Bishop was proud of how far the team progressed. The state champion team had seven players who were seniors.

"I don't think anyone was expecting much at all of us this year, so this has been a really good season. As a whole, I really loved the way our team improved over the course of the season, and as far as performance and expectations we are way ahead of where I thought we were going to be," said Bishop.

Cougars' junior outside hitter Annie Shurtz, who led the team in kills this season, echoed her coach's sentiments.

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