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Ringside at Campo's Dual Meet

By Robin Schoettler Fox



Campo's Wesley Caspillo, here defending, battled until he pinned Las Lomas' Caldwell with 3 seconds left in the match
Photo Alan Wandesforde



Campo wrestlers' excitement explodes when teammate Tom Flowers pins his opponent
Photo Jamie Fox

There's something missing from the statistics from Thursday's dual wrestling meet between Campolindo and Las Lomas. The points, the pins, even the eventual Campolindo win (38-28), all that is true.

It's just that it felt like fans had witnessed something more than just a series of fourteen one-on-one wrestling matches.

"I told you it was going to be exciting," said Campo's head coach, Bob McLaughlin.

True. But it's not the missing piece.

Maybe it's just what happens when two essentially even teams come together with a full line-up, like these two teams had. Or maybe it helped that the competing coaches are actually friends.

What was clear was that by mid-match, it was easy to forget that center ring was just a mat, sitting in the center of the small Campolindo gym. Or, that the fans that filled the gym were these wrestlers' friends and family, many of them new to the program. And it was easy to forget that some of these wrestlers were this year's new recruits, people who hadn't always known one another.

Like Campo freshman Wesley Caspillo, wrestling in the 103-pound weight-class, who had a thrilling come from behind victory, pinning his opponent with only 3 seconds left in the match, the crowd's roar filling the room at the ref's slap of the mat.

Or, senior Max Schenk, the latest addition to the Campo wrestling roster, on deck for his inaugural wrestle and who had attracted a cluster of new fans-- his football buddies.

"It's more a fight, than a sport," Schenk said afterwards, having earned a few points before being pinned 3:01 minutes into the match. But he wasn't complaining. He'd been looking to join a new team, pursue a new sport.

Win or lose, everyone, including Schenk, knew that he'd solved a big problem

on the Campo wrestling roster, filling a hole where the 215 pound slot had been. With Schenk's arrival, the team's forfeit days were over.

Campo has a large roster this year, having attracted more than 30 freshmen after demonstrations in P.E. classes. Wrestling is a tough sport, demanding across a variety of training and lifestyle disciplines. Some of those freshmen dropped off, but most have hung in there, wrestling both the varsity and junior varsity level.

"The kids really enjoy each other," said Campo's assistant coach and former Campo wrestler, Tom Renno, who also teaches at the school. "The closeness of the team is I think what keeps kids engaged, and they stay on the team instead of thinking, 'I don't really care about being here.'"

And there it was - the thing missing from the statistics. The things fans had witnessed.

Camaraderie.

Like they had each other's back.

DFAL Campolindo 38, Las Lomas 28 At Campolindo

103: Caspillo (C) p. Caldwell, 5:57;
112: Allen (LL) p. Ingersoll, 2:59;
119: Flowers (C) p. Sirott, 2:30;
125: Aw (LL) d. Jackson, 12-3;
130: Toupin (C) d. Larsen, 34-18;
135: Barnum (LL) d. Kurkjian, 7-6;
140: Andersen (C) d. Hunter, 12-7;
145: Gallindo (C) d. Samuel, 4-1;
152: Robinson (C) d. Barry, 10-5;
160: Gardner (LL) d. Vehar, 7-5;
171: Dougherty (LL) p. Smith, 1:04;
189: Angelides (C) p. Gamble, 1:10;
215: Hernandez (LL) p. Schenk, 3:01;
285: Field (C) p. Cundy, 3:14.

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