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Campo and Acalanes boys lacrosse top NCS DII bracket

By Karl Buscheck



Josh Baginski Photos Gint Federas

With Campolindo commanding the top seed in the NCS Division 2 bracket and Acalanes sitting second, the local rivals and newly-minted DAL co-champs could be headed for a postseason title-game showdown.

"That is looking so far forward," Acalanes head coach Brent Ringwood warned, brushing aside the talk of a third meeting with the Cougars. "That's not even worth envisioning at the moment."

The clubs split the DAL season series, with the Dons winning the first leg in Moraga, and the Cougars claiming the second in Lafayette in the penultimate game of the league schedule on May 2.

"It would be great," Ringwood said before stopping to chuckle. "But that wouldn't be conducive to winning many games if we were thinking that far ahead."

The Dons and the Cougars aren't just among the premier teams in NCS, but in the entire state, ranked No. 36 and 31, respectively, by MaxPreps.

"We're pretty pumped that our league is very well-represented at the top (of the bracket)," Ringwood said. "And we're looking to make a deep run."

After a first-round bye, Acalanes started the postseason by taking care of No. 10 University, 10-3, on May 12 at home. They'll meet the No. 3 seed - Marin Academy - on May 17 in a semifinals showdown.

Owners of an 17-4 record overall (13-1 in DAL), the Dons are making a postseason push while navigating an array of injury problems. With the team at less than 100 percent strength, Ringwood is looking for his senior backline - featuring goalie Nate Welcomer and defenders Josh Baginski and Sean Ortlieb - to frustrate opposing attackers.

"For us, considering how banged up we are, we're going to really have to rely on our defense," Ringwood said. "We're going to have to make some really talented offensive teams think quite a bit about how they're going to score on us and we've got to find ways to manufacture points. But it's going to be a grind for sure."

Campolindo, who followed up their opening-round bye with an 18-6 rout over No. 9 Saint Mary's of Stockton on May 12 in Moraga, have their sights set on adding to their trophy collection after tying the Dons atop the league.

"I'd say it's a testament to how hard our boys have been working and putting their minds to a goal," head coach Mitchel Frey said of his team's regular-season accomplishments. "Obviously, being co-league champions and then ultimately NCS champions is just part of their journey. And it's a testament to how hard they've worked and continue to work to reach their goals."

With No. 4 Piedmont awaiting in the semifinals on May 17, the Cougars' record stands at 17-3 (13-1 in league). Like the neighboring Dons, Campolindo's cast of established stars have piloted the program throughout the DAL slate and the NCS run.

"Our group of seniors have done an excellent job of leading by example as well as by their play on the field," Frey said. "And it's just really helped develop a lot chemistry amongst the team."



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