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Acalanes boys win NCS Championship over Northgate

By Jon Kingdon



Photos Gint Federas

Avoiding a letdown after a tense, five-set victory over Campolindo (27-29, 25-20, 22-25, 25-20, 18-16), Acalanes won the NCS volleyball championship over Northgate 3 games to 1 (25-21, 29-27, 26-28, 25-23).

Under coach Mason Mulvaney, Acalanes has shown constant improvement over the last five seasons: 1-14 in 2014, 2-15 in 2015; 13-13 in 2016; 28-7 in 2017 and 27-8 as NCS champion and qualifying for the CIS tournament this year.

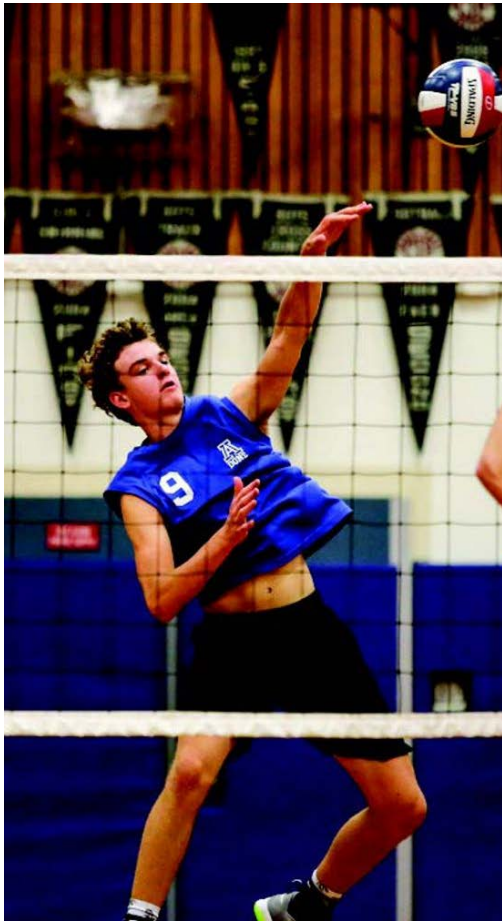
Against Northgate, the Dons won the first two games and were up 24-20 in the third game but Northgate fought off five match points to win the third game before Acalanes clinched the match on their second match point in the fourth game.

Acalanes' victory over Washington in the quarter finals also went five games and the five set victories proved to be an advantage to his team, according to Mulvaney. "We had a solid game plan and we trusted in each other. Tonight, we were able to bear down in the pressure situations. It helped us having won the five set matches prior to tonight's game. When we got up 2-0, the pressure was on them and at 2-1 as well."

Acalanes had a balanced offense that did not allow Northgate to focus on one player. Mulvaney was effusive in his comments on his team's offense: "Austin Kinnear was phenomenal, all the more impressive in that he is only a freshman; Ethan Browne played the entire match though under the weather; Colin Kirbach who constantly put the ball where it needed to be and Alex Franke who had many huge blocks up front."

Acalanes began the season with an 11-5 record and went on to win 17 of their next 20 games, maturing as the season went along according to Mulvaney: "We're a young team, only starting one senior and we came together as the season concluded."

Just as important as the victory, the volleyball team also received the NCS Scholastic Championship team with a team GPA average of 3.42, third highest of all NCS Division 3 teams.



Austin Kinnear

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[back](#)

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