

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Campolindo defeats Northgate to win NCS Championship



Justin Lineweaver



Josh Ewert

Photos Gint Federas

### By Jon Kingdon

After a bruising first game loss, the Campolindo boys volleyball team came back to win the next three games over the No. 1 seeded team in the tournament, Northgate, to win the North Coast Section championship by scores of 15-25, 25-21, 26-24, 25-15.

As the No. 3 seed, Campolindo had to play at Northgate in front of crowd that was equally loud for both sides, though Northgate took control of the first set and never let up. Freshman Josh Ewert, who played with a sore knee and had to be helped off the court at the end of the match, put that game behind him quickly: "I like to think that first set was

just a warmup for us."

Sophomore libero Justin Lineweaver saw the first set as out of character for the Cougars: "We were just super nervous and jittery and we knew that we had to just calm down and play our game. After the first set, our defense was much more intense we started picking up balls which built our momentum from there."

Head coach David Chen has seen dominant sets like the first one from both sides and knew not to panic: "We did some good things in the first set but we couldn't get any rhythm and knew we had to hang in there. After that our defense was so much better. We've been calling out our defense all year and kept telling them, 'Defense is

a mindset. See the ball and move and get it."

Sets two and three were very close but the defense combined with the power at the net by Ewert and sophomore Ben Blakley wore down Northgate by the fourth set. Blakley attributed the victory to the team's mindset: "It was total energy. After the first set, we picked up the energy and realized that we had to play our game."

Chen left nothing to chance in the last set with Campolindo leading 24-14 when he called time out: "I told them to stop celebrating. We haven't won yet." One service fault later, it was all over.

Just as emotional was the semifinal match between Campolindo and Acalanes,

with Campolindo winning 22-25, 26-24, 25-7, 25-23. In the final set, with the score 13-13, there were nine ties until the final point.

Acalanes had defeated

Campolindo in three close matches prior to the semifinal game but every game in those matches had been close.

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Ben Blakley

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