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Cougars Start Season with a Roar

By Guy Dotan



Anthony Rodriguez, "Rocket" (20) Photo Doug Kohen

Football season has officially begun for the Campolindo Cougars, and the team started off this new season in grand fashion. In what was supposed to be a game about discovering the team's strengths and weaknesses, the players worked together with such precision, it was as if they had been playing together for years. Campolindo demolished Livermore 35-22 in a game that featured success on all fronts for the Cougars. It only took one play for the Cougars to get onto the board as senior and three year letterman Anthony Fadelli returned the opening kickoff 99 yards for a touchdown. The return was a thing of beauty as Fadelli caught the kickoff, ran upfield toward his blockers, right through the hole they created for him, and then into the endzone untouched. The Cougars never looked back. A seven yard touchdown run by senior Anthony "Rocket" Rodriguez and a punt block and recovery in the endzone by Ty Fach kicked the door wide open as the Cougars built a 21-0 first quarter lead. In the second quarter, the Campo offense was led by big runs from senior Kawa "Cookie" Kazzaz and capped off by a 1 yard touchdown run by Rodriguez. Shutdown defense complemented the effective running game, and the Cougars had a 28-0 halftime lead. During the second half of the game, the Cougars played a bit passively at first but were able to hold off a late fourth quarter Cowboy surge to put the game away. All in all, every element of the team played well, from the offense led by junior quarterback Tommy Stephens; to the defense, which held the Cowboys scoreless in the first half; to the special teams that scored two touchdowns and were a perfect five for five in extra points by junior Ben Rudolph. "As a team I think we brought great energy and focus to the game," Stephens said after the game, "Our special teams were phenomenal along with our defense. I thought our offensive line did a great job up front being physical in the run game and our backs ran hard." Junior wide receiver and safety Patrick Wirth said, "Although we performed well in the first half, we really didn't execute to our expectations in the second half. We played well overall, but we still have a lot of work to do." There is still a long way to go in the season. Campolindo fared well in their first non-league game, but what really matters are the DFAL matchups soon to come. The camaraderie between the players is essential in keeping them focused and entertained at the same time. "On the field, the older players help (the younger players) out and try to make us as good as possible. Off the field, we are all great friends and they are a lot of fun to hang out with," Wirth says of the team's chemistry. As for the rest of the year, Stephens is confident in the team's "strong core of guys that are excited for everyone to contribute and play together. We know that we'll need to continue to improve in all areas if we want to compete each week, but we are all working hard to get better."



Kawa Kazzaz "Cookie" (25) Photo Doug Kohen

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