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Campolindo brothers

By Jon Kingdon

Last season, the theme song for the Campolindo boy's basketball team was "We are the Champions" by Queen. Though that may ultimately be their theme song once again this year, as this point, it could just as easily be "We are Family" by Sister Sledge. The team includes three sets of brothers: Chase and Cade Bennett, Rex and Cole Curtiss, and Carter and Aidan Mahaney. Just for good measure, the Cougars' head coach Steven Dyer is ably assisted by his younger brother, Chris, as his assistant coach, both of whom were also teammates when they played at Campolindo.

There is a unique relationship between brothers when they compete and play on the same team, says Dyer: "My brother was a better player than I was. It's a huge advantage to growing up and getting beaten up by your older brother. Last season, I had both of the Mahaney brothers on the team but to have three sets of brothers on one team is pretty unique. Chase Bennett and Carter Mahaney and Rex Curtiss have all been supportive of their younger brother's basketball skills, so I think that has added to their basketball success."

For Cade Bennett, it was more than basketball with his brother. They've always been close and competitive. "We've been playing with and against each other all of our lives," Cade says. "Chase was a bit of a teacher to me."

Being only a year apart and playing the same position has not led to any dissension between the two, Chase says. "Looking back, it was always neck and neck. I'm a little better shooter but we work out a lot together so we have a lot of similar skills."

Two years ago, there were actually three Curtiss brothers attending Campolindo simultaneously. Oldest brother Harry was a baseball and tennis player while Rex and Cole were playing football and basketball. Unlike the Bennetts and the Mahaneys, with the Curtiss', there's a size difference between the brothers and each plays a different position in both football and basketball. Cole has a couple of inches on Rex and played on the defensive line for the football team and in the front court on the basketball team. Rex played wide receiver and had 34 receptions this past season and plays point guard in basketball.

Being so close in age led Rex and Cole to play the same sports: "Growing up, Cole was able to follow in my footsteps in the different kinds of sports we played," said Rex. "Since we were only one year apart, we tended to gravitate towards the same things. We really found our niche with basketball and football. When we were younger, I would work with him on his shooting and dribbling. He got the size so I ended up as a point guard and he played in the front court."

With two older brothers, Cade had the benefit of learning from both of them: "Unlike Harry, Rex continued to play basketball in high school and he has been an inspiration and someone whose skill I wanted to work up to. We've always played sports together growing up and I've always gone to his games and now that we're on the same team it's pretty special. I may take it for granted but what other opportunities am I going to get to play with my brother on the same team?"

Despite a two-year difference in their ages, for the Mahaneys, it's the second year that they have been teammates. "It's definitely been an advantage to being the younger brother because Carter had two years of high school basketball experience when I came in," Aidan says. "I watched his games when I was younger and I learned some stuff and coming in and having someone that knew what it was about on things, like the away games and how the crowd would react and what to do and what not to do was helpful."

Carter understood his role with Aidan: "I do my teaching. We have a younger brother in the seventh grade and we're both tutoring him. Playing together helped us when teams tried to press us, but we also had other good players on the team such as Jake Chan."

"It also helped that we're both good ball handlers and coach Dyer had confidence in us," Aidan says. Growing up together and playing together were two different things initially for Aidan. "At the beginning of last year, Carter had a lot more experience than me so I would go into practices and not be fully ready for what was to come and he was able to figure out things quicker than me, but with his help, I caught on pretty quick. We've always had a competitive spirit and I'm always trying to one-up him and it's just a healthy competition and it's made me a lot better because of it."

"Chase, Carter and Rex have all been supportive of their younger brother's basketball skills and that's led to a lot of their success," said Dyer. "You see competition between brothers all the time. They all enjoy that, especially with Chase and Cade who play a similar position and Carter and Aidan will go at it."

Cole Curtiss also felt there was a familial connection on the floor with Rex and the team: "We both know how each other plays the game and we're super competitive and I can tell when there are two brothers on the floor, they definitely want to win and I can tell if my brother is working hard, I'm going to work just as hard as him."

For Cade Bennett, it's more than knowing his brother's game; it's the closeness of the team as a whole: "Because we're so close with the team, it's not just me and my brother, we all have little communication things."

With the brothers all playing in various leagues and teams simultaneously, the effort required by the parents is something that should not be overlooked. Prior to high school, the last time the Mahaneys had played together was in the sixth grade.

"I played on the varsity as a sophomore and Cole was on the freshman team," said Rex Curtiss. "We would play at different locations so our parents would have to split up a lot of the time."

Growing up, the Bennetts, for the most part, played on the same teams, though there was one time that Cade was not up for playing against his brother: "When Chase was about 10 years old, we were on opposing teams, he did not want to play against me so he sat out the game."

Still and all, it's proven to be a positive for the brothers individually and the team as a whole as summed up by Cole Curtiss: "Overall, I think it's pretty cool to have three sets of brothers and two coaches who are brothers on the same team."



Cade and Chase Bennett

Photos Gint Federas



Rex and Cole Curtiss



Aidan and Carter Mahaney



Steven and Chris Dyer

Drew Anderson's long and winding road to the NFL

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However, in his next game, Anderson tore his pectoral muscle which required surgery and signaled the end of his career at Buffalo. After taking eight classes in the spring to graduate with his degree in psychology, Anderson had another year of eligibility and used it to transfer to Murray State University (Kentucky).

It was another Bay Area connection that led him to Murray State, said Anderson: "Brian Hamilton was an assistant coach there and had been the head coach at Concord High School. He knew the coaches at DVC and with their recommendations, it provided

me with a great opportunity to go there and earn the starting spot. When I look back at myself as a redshirt freshman and then as a senior at Murray State, I could see that I was a totally different player." In 11 games at Murray State, Anderson went on to complete 60% of his passes and threw for 20 touchdowns.

That's when the NFL became a realistic goal for Anderson: "It was a gradual thing for me but, to be honest, there were a lot of times when I had those doubts and did not think that playing professional football would ever happen, but I continued to work and improve and by the end of my college career, I started to see that maybe this is something that I could do."

After his pro day at Murray State and workouts at the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders facilities, it was time for the draft. Anderson was a free agent, and with the help of his agent Greg Linton he was able to choose among a number of teams that were interested in his services. The Cardinals had a new head coach in Kliff Kingsbury and a 5'10" quarterback they drafted with the overall first pick named Kyler Murray.

"That's one of the awesome things about Coach Kingsbury," said the 6'4" Anderson. "He knows how to play to different guy's strengths. It's a super friendly quarterback system and he makes it work for whichever quarterback is in there. As with anything, by

the last preseason game, I was feeling a lot more comfortable. Going against starters in practice and seeing that speed, the game did slow down for me. The game is faster but the players around me with the Cardinals are also much better and it forces you to raise your level. The more I played, the more comfortable I got."

Anderson played in 3 of the 4 preseason games for the Cardinals going 18 for 32 for 104 yards with 2 touchdowns and 1 interception. Playing against the Raiders in preseason was a particular highlight for Anderson, going 6 for 9 for 59 yards and one touchdown pass: "At the Raider game, I had a lot of family and friends come out for that game and it was special for me. The Raiders

were the team that I grew up rooting for and playing against them with family and friends there was definitely a special moment for sure."

Having learned so many different schemes and terminologies from high school to the NFL, in the end, proved to be beneficial to Anderson: "Offenses may be different but you're still trying to accomplish the same things so I do think that playing in a number of different systems for a bunch of different coaches helped me in a holistic sense of understanding football. It obviously wasn't the route that I would have chosen out of high school but in learning offensive football, it's definitely been beneficial to me."