

Published November 24th, 2021

Lamorinda football in the playoffs; Campo leading the way

By Jon Kingdon



#9 Dashiell Weaver Photo Ty Sedman

After the sixth week of the regular season, Campolindo had a plebian 3-3 record. From that point on, the Cougars won six straight games, the last two being playoff games in the Division II NCS over Dublin (38-28) and the No. 1 seed, San Ramon Valley (SRV) (17-14) last Friday night.

Coach Kevin Macy set the tone for the evening by throwing deep on the game's first play. The Cougars scored on that drive on a 10-yard pass to Connor Fritch from Dashiell Weaver. "We wanted to keep throwing to (Bradley) Nestal deep and he made some big plays including a great touchdown catch," Macy said. Max Rittman and Robbie Mascheroni also made key receptions in the game.

Weaver threw for 190 yards and ran for another 90 yards, constantly converting third down plays. "Dash gave us that added dimension in the running game,

something we had been encouraging him to do all season."

Late in the first half, Macy stayed aggressive on a fourth-and-goal play at the SRV 2, attempting to run for a touchdown, passing up the sure field goal. Even though they did not score on the play, it sent a message to the players. "We preached all week that we would be aggressive," Macy said. "I wanted to show the players that we were not going to change that attitude." Ironically, it was a 23-yard field goal by Ryan Sintchak late in the third quarter, that in the end provided the winning margin for the Cougars.

SRV came into the game averaging 28 points a game and only scored their second touchdown after a fumbled snap when Campolindo was trying to run out the clock late in the fourth quarter. The defensive line was led by the only three defensive tackles on the team, Tyrone Tuavale, Arian Mosaddad and Elijah Klock. "They did a great job in taking on the large San Ramon line," Macy said.

Senior cornerback Zion Adams took the plan to heart: "We got into their receivers' faces which they weren't used to. We just came out and took it to them."

After SRV scored to make the score 17-14, it was Charlie Murrin that ensured the victory, recovering the onside kick as it lay free after bouncing off a Cougar player. Campolindo never gave up possession of the ball after that. Charlie Murrin ensured the victory by recovering the onside kick as it lay free after bouncing off a Cougar player.

Speaking to the players, their parents and fans, Macy was ecstatic: "You've just seen one of the greatest games we've ever played. People kept kicking dirt on our graves this year, but we just kept coming back and tonight was nothing more than an aggressive, dig in and fight all night battle and we never buckled. You were lucky to be to a witness to this game."

Campolindo will be playing at 7 p.m. Nov. 27 at Foothill High School (Pleasanton) for the NCS championship.

Miramonte

After starting the season off with five straight wins, Miramonte finished the regular season with a 5-4 record. "We were in a tough league," Coach Jack Scharff said. "Four of the five teams made the playoffs and they all made it into the second round."

Miramonte won their first-round game in the Division 5 North Coast Section over Encinal by a score of 42-23, in a game that was not that close. For their efforts, they had to play Del Norte High School in Crescent City, a six-hour ride from Orinda and coming up on the short end of a 42-13 game.

For the season, offense was not a problem for Miramonte. The Matadors averaged 28.5 points per game, led by junior quarterback Luke Duncan who threw for 2,765 yards with 28 touchdowns while also running for 177 yards. Complimenting Duncan in the backfield was all-everything Sam Ross who started the year off as an offensive tackle before moving to running back and gaining 288 yards on 36 carries.

"My philosophy is to put your best athletes in a place when they can most influence a game which for Ross

was as a running back," Scharff said. "Sam had the same effect as our middle linebacker (8.4 tackles per game). The problem was that he did get a lot of wear and tear on his body."

Tyler Dutto led the team with 63 receptions, averaging 19.2 yards/catch and scored 14 touchdowns. Jimmy Foster (27/358/3 TDs), Cooper Bohlig (24/361/2 TDs) and Adam Brudzinski (20/192/3 TDs) were Duncan's primary targets. Bohlig also had a 99-yard touchdown interception in the Encinal game that was key to the Matador's victory.

Miramonte's defense gave up 29.5 points/game though they were not without their own highlights. "We had a goal line stands against Encinal which allowed us to have 2-3 score advantage, allowing us to coast at the end." Besides Ross, DE Andreas Cornett, LB Aiden Stone and Dutto, Bohlig at the safety positions and Chase Bliss who was the team's best corner were key players on defense.

Acalanes

Offense was not the question for Acalanes, averaging 43.6 points per game, finishing the season with a 6-5 record. Luke Souza ran the offense throwing for 3,145 yards, 38 TD with only eight interceptions and a QB rating of 129.5.

Seniors Will Berrien (62/855 10 TDs), Dante Montgomery (58/1108/14 TDs) and Evan Malmquist (26/234) led the receiving core with underclassmen, Trevor Rogers, Ethan Torres, Andrew Habas, Paul Kuhner ready to step in next year. Malmquist also rushed for 1,010 yards and junior Ellis Burger ran for 341 yards, averaging 12.6 yards/carry.

Acalanes gave up 25.5 points per game. "Defensively we struggled with the size of our players," Coach Floyd Burnsed said. "We had a hard time stopping the run and making plays when we need to make a big play."

The Dons' loss to El Cerrito in the NCS first round game was another example of mistakes sabotaging Acalanes' chance to advance in the playoffs. "Late in the first half, we were up 26-6 and we fumbled the ball at midfield. El Cerrito ran a halfback pass, and our DB came up and they completed it down to the 3-yard line, scoring on the last play of the half, which fired them up. They then got the ball to open the second half and they scored in three plays." El Cerrito eventually won the game 40-32.

With 30 returning players on the varsity, 44 players coming up from JV and a freshmen squad that had 58 players, this should set the foundation for next year's team.

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