

Published May 25th, 2022

Campolindo Football Hall of Fame induction ceremony

By Jon Kingdon



From left: Jaime Vega, Tyler Petite, Karl Thornton and Coach Kevin Macy Photo Jon Kingdon

The annual Campolindo Hall of Fame was celebrating three seasons this year: the 2011 (14-1) team, the 2014 (16-0) team, and last year's 10-4 NCS champions.

Representing the 2011 team were Jaime Vega, a fullback and linebacker, and Karl Thornton, a wide receiver and safety, with Tyler Petite, a tight end and defensive end, representing the 2014 team.

As for this year's team, early in the season, there was a concern that there would not be much to celebrate after a home loss to Aptos and a loss to Liberty in the Honor Bowl due to a disputed call. "After the loss to Liberty, some of the dads said we lost our Hall of Fame for this team because they felt we might not get close to winning anything big the rest of the season," Macy said.

"Ultimately they were proven wrong, and our parents were sky high for this evening."

Besides the players and the teams, there were honors for Campolindo basketball player Aidan Mahaney, senior

Lleyton Allen, senior cancer survivor Dylan Mandel and team mother Lauren Fritch. "We honored Aidan for letting our team go crazy at all of those basketball games," Macy said. "Lleyton sang the anthem at our home games and the youth jamboree games and has been a real ambassador of positivity and good cheer through the COVID quarantine. Dylan who has always been the happiest, most cheerful person God has ever created before and through the cancer. He never let anyone feel sorry for him. The player made sure to see him off for his last chemo treatment. He's such a great success story . and his hair's growing back. Lauren Fritsch who led Campolindo football to new heights on and off the field."

Tyler Petite went on to play four years and graduate from USC and is now living in Newport Beach, working for Arthrex in medical device sales. Growing up, Petite attended the Hall of Fame dinner every year. "It was very good to see so many players that Coach Macy would talk about and then be at their induction and then to be here myself, it's really great. Coach makes it all about the team and its heritage."

In Petite's three years on the varsity, Campolindo's combined won-lost record was 37-3 and he averaged 24 yards a catch and was a dominating defensive end that teams ran away from. "There's no program like Campolindo football," Petite said. "It wasn't just a matter of how good you were at football, they wanted to find a way to bring the team closer as friends to where we would hang out together on and off the field. They knew that a team that loved playing with each other would go further than a team that just relied on ability. I've had the opportunity to play in some unique places but there was never anything compared to playing with my best friends in Orinda for 15 years."

Jaime Vega graduated from the University of Oregon and now works in San Francisco in technology sales. It was not just Vega who was overwhelmed when he heard of his induction. "I have been to many of these events, and I was very honored to get the call," Vega said. "I called my dad, and he broke down crying as it was as special for him as it was for me. The effort, sweat and tears that go into this event, it's truly a brotherhood and when players leave Campo, it stays with them forever."

For Vega, it was the things that were not easy in the football program that have proven the most valuable to him in his personal and professional career. "Coach Macy made it so that we were facing life's adversities in the non-real lens of high school football with challenges to overcome and roadblocks to get through every week. I've found that in life, things are a little easier because of the challenges that we had already overcome."

In 2011, Karl Thornton and Griffin Piatt, who was inducted last year, had their own competitions in that they both played wide receiver and safety. Thornton would catch 56 passes for 789 yards to Piatt's 50 for 1,017 yards and each had 11 of the team's 38 interceptions.

Thornton went on to play rugby at the UC Berkeley, winning a national championship and runs an art business in San Francisco with his sister Bridgette. "I'm really just supporting her as she is the one who creates the fine arts which we sell wholesale across the country and I do everything that is not creative," Thornton said.

The football program is something that Thornton looks back on in his post-Campolindo life: "Campo football was the ultimate foundation. It paved the way for so many moments that I could reflect back on, throughout college, looking for jobs, entering the real world. I was able to fall back on knowing that I went

through harder times in a way that Coach Macy made our practices feel they were hard times, when it was really exercise and all the credit goes to him and for that I'm eternally grateful."

Thornton then gave this advice to the current Campolindo players: Be a good son, be a good brother, be coachable and a good teammate and make sure that players that are on your left and right know that you are there without having to say a word and if you do all of that it will show up on Friday nights."

Macy concluded the evening by giving credit to the parents of all the players: "A small school like Campolindo is not supposed to accomplish the things that we do on the football field. You're the magic that brings all of the kids to our team, so eager, trained, prepared, and wanting to achieve and they allow us to have that magic."

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