

CCCAA WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL 2011 REGIONAL PLAYOFFS

From the very first State Poll released in September, four teams appeared to separate themselves from the rest of the pack. None of the four ever dropped a spot in the rankings as defending state champion and undefeated Los Angeles Pierce, top NorCal seed Cabrillo, Big 8 champion Santa Rosa, and South Coast Conference champ El Camino advanced to the CCCAA State Women's Volleyball Championships Dec. 3-4 at Shasta College.

Here are recaps of the four Regional Third Round Finals:

ROUND 3

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

(All upper seeds hosted)

No. 1 Los Angeles Pierce d. No. 5 Golden West, 3-1 (25-15, 25-21, 24-26, 25-18)—Playing without their injured All-American libero Kathleen Wright, the undefeated Brahmas used an extra-strong team serving performance and a .359 hitting percentage in eliminating the Orange Empire Conference champion Rustlers in four games. In three playoff wins, Pierce lost more sets (four) than it did all regular season (three). Pierce put an end to Golden West's 17-match win streak. Pierce is making its fifth appearance at the CCCAA State Championships since 2004. Golden West, the college with the most state titles (17) and the most state tournament appearances (24) has not been to the state championships since 2007. Sakurako Fujii knocked down 17 kills and Veronika Ban had 10 kills and served five aces to lead the Pierce attack. Jasmine Levi added 11 kills and setter Janelle Futch added 47 assists. The Brahmas kept the Orange Empire Conference from having a State Tourney participant for the first time since 1989. **LA Pierce (30-0) advances to CCCAA State Final Four.** Golden West ends its season at 21-4.

No. 2 El Camino d. No. 3 Grossmont, 3-0 (25-18, 25-12, 27-25)—The Warriors were back-to-back state champions in 2007 and 2008, and after a two-year absence they are making a return trip to the State Championship Tournament behind a solid sweep over the Griffins. After dominating the first two set wins, El Camino appeared it would be stretched out trailing 16-8 in the third game. Instead, the Warriors chipped away as Tarryn Luafalemana recorded three straight kills to take a 26-25 lead. A Grossmont error closed out the sweep. Luafalemana finished with 15 kills and 11 digs while Lauren Edwards added 13 kills and 13 digs. Setter Sarah McFadden dished out 30 assists and had 11 digs for El Camino. Led by Denise DeVine, Grossmont was hoping to make its first advancement to the State Tournament since 1992. Two of the Griffins' three losses this season came against powerful El Camino.

El Camino (24-2) advances to CCCAA State Final Four. Grossmont ends its season at 22-3.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

No. 1 Cabrillo d. No. 5 San Joaquin Delta, 3-1 (27-29, 25-23, 25-13, 25-19)—The North top-seeded Seahawks let a long lead slip away in set one, but went on to knock off the surging Mustangs in four games. Cabrillo makes its seventh trip to the state tournament and is one of three teams returning to the Final Four from last year. Cabrillo made 10 serving errors in the first two sets, but cut down on the mistakes to win the last two games in convincing style. Leading the Seahawks were Tori Bozzo with 19 kills and Summer Mitchell with 12 kills and 20 digs. Kaitlin Shaug added nine kills and six blocks. Sierra Clark stuffed eight blocks and Alex DaRosa played well at the net with seven blocks. Brooke Carroll dished out 47 assists and Ashley Pittman continued her stalwart defensive play with 33 digs. For the Mustangs, Heather Tatupu finished with 18 kills and 21 digs and three aces. Emily McConahey added 24 digs, Sara Stuart had 43 assists to go with 11 digs., and Keilani Kitagawa tacked on seven kills and six digs. Delta is the North leader in most state tournament appearances with 16, but will miss out for the second straight season or since the Elite Eight was cut to a Final Four in 2010. **Cabrillo (28-1) advances to the CCCAA State Final Four.** San Joaquin Delta ends its season at 20-9.

No. 2 Santa Rosa d. No. 3 American River, 3-0 (25-14, 25-20, 25-20)—For the third time this season, the Bear Cubs swept the Beavers as Santa Rosa makes its fifth consecutive trip to the state championships. It is the 12th time that SRJC advanced to the state tournament. American River hasn't been to the state tourney since 1995 and is the only team to defeat top seed Cabrillo this season back in the semifinals of the San Jose Tournament. However, ARC ends the year with a 0-9 mark in sets against its Big 8 Conference rival. A theme of the playoffs for the top teams has been tough serving and that was no different tonight for Santa Rosa. Karimah Hay served four aces to go with eight kills and 11 digs while Sam Siebert spun three aces along with 33 assists and 13 digs. The well-balanced SRJC attack included Margaret Barnes with nine kills and four blocks, Olivia Urban with eight kills, Taylor Nelson 7 kills plus 17 digs and three blocks, and Kristyn Casalino with five kills. Santa Rosa was state runner-up last year and in 2008 and will, along with Cabrillo, still be hunting for that elusive first-ever North state title in the sport.

Santa Rosa (28-2) advances to the CCCAA State Final Four. American River ends its season at 23-7.