



CCCAA Men's Volleyball State Championship

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grossmont, Irvine Valley knock off top seeds to earn spot in State Championship final

Semifinal #1: Grossmont 3, Long Beach 1 (17-25, 25-16, 25-22, 25-22)

Grossmont College upset Long Beach City College by a final score of 3-1 in Semifinal No. 1 of the 2011 California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) Men's Volleyball State Championship on Wednesday night at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa.

Grossmont, the No. 2 seed out of the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference, lost the opening set 17-25 before rallying to take the final three 25-16, 25-22, and 25-22 to secure the school's first ever appearance in the State Championship final.

Long Beach, the top seed from the Western State Conference, looked impressive in its opening set as the Vikings compiled a .370 hitting percentage. LBCC jumped out to a 19-10 lead and never looked back.

But that didn't faze Grossmont. The Griffins bounced back from a .000 hitting percentage in the opener and responded with an easy 25-16 victory in Set 2.

"We've had a lot of matches this year where we lost the first set and won three in a row," said Grossmont head coach Fred Featherstone. "These kids are fearless and tough mentally. Getting their butts kicked in the opener didn't bother them."

LBCC rallied late in the second to get within two points (15-13) but Grossmont took advantage of seven Long Beach errors and closed out the set win with a kill by outside hitter Shalimar Buchanan to swing momentum ultimately in their favor.

Set 3 saw Long Beach jumped ahead 4-1 before Grossmont came back to take its first lead, 10-9, after a kill by outside hitter Jorge Cabrera. LBCC briefly took the lead late at 16-15, but Grossmont outscored the Vikings 10-7 down the stretch for the win.

And it was more of the same in Set 4. The Vikings held a narrow 10-8 lead after a kill from outside hitter Parker Del Re. But Grossmont rallied for six straight points behind the serving of of Cabrera to jump ahead 14-10.

A kill from Del Re got Long Beach within one late at 23-22, but a service error by Dylan Marquess and a hitting error by Del Re gave Grossmont the set and match.

“There were a lot of unforced errors on both sides,” Featherstone said. “Luckily we made less. Who knows what would have happened if Long Beach had won Set 4.”

Long Beach closes its season with a 13-5 record. Del Re led the Vikings with 13 kills and Max Wechsung chipped in with 11 kills. Marquess had eight digs and Chris Austin led LBCC with 34 assists.

Jose Mendoza led Grossmont (16-4) with 13 kills while Jacob Haar added 12 kills. Kyle Wulf led the Griffins with eight digs and Shane Beatty totaled 49 assists.

Grossmont will face Irvine Valley College at 7 pm on Friday (Apr. 22) in the State Championship final.

Semifinal #2: Irvine Valley 3, Orange Coast 1 (28-26, 25-21, 17-25, 25-21)

Irvine Valley continued the upset theme on Wednesday night, beating Pacific Coast Athletic Conference champion and top seed Orange Coast College 3-1 in Semifinal No. 2 of the 2011 California Community College Athletic Association (CCCCAA) Men's Volleyball State Championship at Orange Coast in Costa Mesa.

Irvine Valley, the No. 3 PCAC seed, will look to win its first state title since 2009 and will face Grossmont College in Friday's State Championship final at 7 p.m.

The two conference rival knew each other well after facing off twice earlier this season, both resulting in wins by the Pirates.

“It's hard to beat a team three times,” said head coach Ki Yi. “But at the same token, Coast is a really good team. No one really has an advantage when you have faced each other so many times.”

But IVC stunned Orange Coast as well as the home crowd by stealing Set 1, 28-26. The Pirates led early 16-9 and were up 18-12 before the Lasers rallied for five straight points, including a pair kills by outside hitter Brandon Directo, to get within one point at 18-17. Irvine Valley outscored Orange Coast 11-8 the rest of the way to pull off the win.

The momentum carried over into Set 2, as Irvine Valley stormed out to a quick 4-0 lead after three errors by OCC and a Directo kill. The Lasers led throughout and looked for the sweep in Set 3.

But Orange Coast wasn't going to go down easy. IVC led late in the third, 18-16, but couldn't close it out. Orange Coast scored eight of the last nine points, thanks to a pair of kills by McKay Smith and Jeff Patton to force a fourth set.

Just as in Set 3, IVC came out quickly in the fourth. The Lasers went up 6-0 and led 10-2 after five early OCC errors.

But trailing 18-13, OCC rallied for five unanswered points after three IVC errors and kills from Troy Tomasello and Chris Pratt to get within one point at 18-17.

But OCC would get no closer. Directo's kill off the block on set point get Irvine Valley the set and match win.

Caleb Brophy led Irvine Valley (14-6) with 16 kills, including five in Set 4. Chris Reames had 10 digs and Kevin Fiske totaled 50 assists.

"The distribution of our setting and our kills from the back row are what really led us to this win," he said. "Reames, Brophy, and Fiske really carried us tonight. It was a great team effort as well."

For Orange Coast (16-3), Tomasello had 15 kills and Pratt totaled 12 kills. Danny Baker led all with 16 digs and James Anderson had 47 assists.