

Hyundai California Community College Men's Volleyball Championship Presented by VolleyballOne

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Orange Coast def. El Camino, 25-17, 25-22, 25-22

Los Angeles Pierce def. Santa Barbara City, 25-19, 25-21, 25-15

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

State Championship: Orange Coast (21-1) vs. Pierce (18-0), 7 p.m.

Los Angeles Pierce and Orange Coast advanced to the title match of the 2001 Hyundai/California Community College Volleyball Championship by posting three-game victories in semifinal matches Friday night.

Defending state champion Pierce (18-0) defeated South Coast Conference rival Santa Barbara City for the third time this evening's late match, winning by scores of 25-19, 25-21, and 25-15.

The Brahmas rode the serving of Erick Gomez in game 1, scoring four straight points on Gomez' serve to take a 9-0 lead. Getting another four-point service run from Gomez later in the game to go up 21-11. The Brahmas led 23-12 before closing with a late rally, but Dhiraj Coates pounded down the final point of a 25-19 win.

The second game saw Pierce trail 13-10, but the Brahmas went on a 7-1 run to go up 17-14, then rolled off five straight points later in the game to take a 24-18 lead. In the final game, Pierce took a lead of 13-3 and looked well on their way to victory, but Santa Barbara closed it to 18-14, but managed a lone side-out the rest of the way as Pierce completed the sweep.

Pierce was led by outside hitter Dhiraj Coates, who had 13 kills and a pair of aces. Brandon Burchart had nine kills while Casey Rosdail added seven kills and four blocks. Steve Foote led Pierce with six blocks; setter Dave Kniffin assisted for the winners.

For Santa Barbara City, Avri Jeschke pounded out 13 kills to match Coates for match-best honors. Chris Redfield had 10 kills, and Tim Mays had 26 assists for the Vaqueros.

Earlier in the evening, Orange Coast advanced to the title match with a three-game victory over El Camino. The scores were 25-17, 25-22, and 25-22.

The Pirates were hot early, taking leads of 5-2 and 17-9 in the first game on the way to an easy 25-17 win, then trailed 10-2 in the second game. El Camino rallied in the second, closing the gap to 13-10 behind the offense of Tammy (10 kills in the match) and eventually tying the game at 21. Orange Coast ran off the next three points and eventually took a games-to-none lead when an El Camino dink went into the net.

The Warriors, who had won nine of 11 coming in, played their best volleyball in the third game, as the lead seesawed. Neither team led by more than two points until the Warriors got back-to-back kills from Ben Napoleon to take a 17-10 lead. The Pirates hung tough, though, taking a 19-18 lead before going up for good at 21-19 on back-to-back kills from Soren Schneider. The Pirates closed things out when B.J. Lightvoet pounded down his 12th kill of the night on match point.

George and Lightvoet each had 12 kills to lead their respective squads. Soren Schneider had five of his nine kills in the match while Dave Engle had eight kills and a match-best five blocks and Ryan Owens added six kills and four blocks. Nic Kniffin dished off 35 assists for the Pirates, and libero Ed Chun had a match-high 12 digs to set a single-season Orange Coast record with 223 on the year.

In addition to George, who had a team-high six digs along with his dozen kills, Ben Napoleon had eight kills and Soren Schneider had seven. Pierce, the defending state champion, has advanced to the State Championship match the past two seasons. Golden West in 1999 before defeating the Rustlers in five games in a thrilling final last April at Irvine Valley College. Pierce's kill performance from Lance Walker, the Brahmas twice rallied from one-game deficits to beat Golden West by scores of 15-12, 5-15, 17-16, and 15-9.

Orange Coast advanced to the championship match for the first time since 1997 and will try tomorrow night to win unprecedented sixth state championship. The Pirates won five state championships between 1987 and 1994.

Saturday's 7 p.m. championship match will be played in the large gym at Long Beach City College, 4901 East Carson, Long Beach. The large gym is located on the northeast corner of Faculty Avenue and Lew Davis Street. Parking is available in lots to the west of the gym along Faculty Avenue and to the south of the gym off of Lew Davis. Additional parking is available on the south side of Lew Davis in the Veterans Stadium lot. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$3 for students with ID, faculty and children.

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