

**2002 California Community Colleges Commission on Athletics
Women's Volleyball Championships
Presented by VolleyballOne and the Stockton Sports Commission**

San Joaquin Delta College
Friday-Sunday, December 6-8

GOLDEN WEST WINS 10TH STRAIGHT STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

By Robert Lewis

The title of No. 1 in California Community College women's volleyball belongs to Golden West College. It has now for a decade and counting.

The Rustlers made it an unprecedented 10 consecutive state titles by sweeping tourney host San Joaquin Delta, 30-25, 30-24, 30-21, in the finals of the COA State Championships Dec. 8. Middle blocker Ashley Jensen, who scored 18 kills and 4 blocks in the final, was named the tourney's MVP. Jensen hit .533 in the deciding match.

Golden West Coach Albert Gasparian has directed the Rustlers to 42 consecutive playoff victories (state tournament and regional playoffs combined) dating back to 1996. In Gasparian's 20 years at Golden West, the program owns 14 state championships.

This year's team came into the championships ranked the lowest (No. 6 in the state) it had ever been in the championship streak. The Rustlers (20-5 final record) started the season at 5-5 before breaking off 15 straight victories to clinch title No. 10. In the final, setter Mau Matu contributed 45 assists for Golden West. Outside hitter Michelle Smith added 11 kills and 21 digs, while Jennifer Gardikas had 11 kills.

San Joaquin Delta made a valiant effort to reach the state finals for the first time in its history. The Mustangs, ranked No. 2 in the state for most of the regular season, came out of the loser's bracket after being swept by Golden West in the first round of the double-elimination tourney.

Delta (26-3) first eliminated previously No. 1 Moorpark, 30-25, 30-25, 32-34, 30-25, early Sunday morning. Middle blocker Morgan Loftis put on a show with a state tourney-high 29 kills for Delta. The Mustangs also were helped by another state-tourney high of 65 assists by setter Lissa Danielson. Moorpark (23-3) was paced by Tanya Grover with 18 kills and both middle blocker Kim Haigh and Tawny Thorp with 17 kills each.

A tired Delta team then used the momentum of beating Moorpark by rolling past Orange Coast, 30-17, 30-20, 30-15. Loftis was again terrific with 23 kills and a .676 hitting percentage with no errors. Orange Coast (21-5) finished as the No. 3 team despite 8 kills and 17 digs by Melissa Zapain.

Besides Jensen as MVP, The 2002 All-State Tournament team included Mutu and Smith from Golden West; Loftis, Danielson and outside hitter Cassie Sharp from Delta; setter Jessica Lippi and opposite Krystle Davis from Orange Coast; Haigh and setter Nevena Siljegovic from Moorpark; middle blocker Ashley Esqueda from San Bernardino Valley; and outside hitter Amie Pfeiffer from West Valley