

2001 MEN'S VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

ORANGE EMPIRE CONFERENCE

TEAM	CONF.	OVERALL	vs. OEC
Orange Coast	15-1	20-1	(10-0)
Irvine Valley	10-6	10-6?	(7-3)
Golden West	7-9	7-9	(5-5)
Palomar	6-10	6-10	(4-6)
San Diego Mesa	3-12	3-12	(2-7)
Grossmont	2-13	2-13	(1-8)

* Conference records include interconference matches vs. SCC

SOUTH COAST CONFERENCE

TEAM	CON.	OVERALL	vs. SCC
Los Angeles Pierce	16-0	17-0	(10-0)
El Camino	11-5	11-5	(6-4)
Santa Barbara City	10-6	10-7	(5-5)
Long Beach City	9-7	9-9	(6-4)
Santa Monica City	6-10	6-10	(3-7)
Mt. San Antonio	0-16	1-16	(0-10)

* Conference records include interconference matches vs. OEC

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEN'S VOLLEYBALL
PLAYOFF INFORMATION**

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL PLAYOFFS

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

Golden West (Orange Empire #3, 7-9) at El Camino (South Coast #2, 11-5), 7 p.m.

Santa Barbara City (South Coast #3, 10-7) at Irvine Valley (Orange Empire #2, 10-6), 7 p.m.

**2001 HYUNDAI/CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEN'S VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**

AT LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Orange Coast (Orange Empire #1, 20-1) vs. El Camino/Golden West winner, 6 p.m.

Los Angeles Pierce (South Coast #1, 17-0) vs. Irvine Valley/Santa Barbara City winner, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

State Championship, 7 p.m.

El Camino defeated Long Beach City in three games Wednesday night to grab the final playoff berth from the South Coast Conference and round out the field for the 2001 California Community College men's volleyball playoffs.

Undefeated Los Angeles Pierce (17-0) of Woodland Hills, the South Coast Conference champion, and Orange Empire Conference champion Orange Coast (20-1) from Costa Mesa have already earned places in the final four of the 2001 Hyundai/California Community College Men's Volleyball Championship, which will be played April 27 and 28 at Long Beach City College, 4901 East Carson Street in Long Beach. Pierce defeated Orange Coast in five games on March 23 at Orange Coast, handing the Pirates their only loss of the year.

El Camino (11-5) earned second place in the South Coast Conference with Wednesday's win and will host Golden West (7-9), the third-place finisher from the Orange Empire Conference in a regional playoff match Tuesday (April 24) at 7 p.m. in Torrance. The Warriors have won nine of their last 11 matches, with a five-game win over Golden West on March 14 included in that skein. The El Camino-Golden West winner will advance to face Orange Coast in a state semifinal match.

Irvine Valley (10-6), the runner-up in the Orange Empire Conference, will play host to Santa Barbara City (10-6), the third-place team from the South Coast Conference, in Tuesday's other regional match. Despite their third-place finish, Santa Barbara may have an edge as they make the long trip to face the Lasers. The Vaqueros have won seven of their last nine matches and have already won at Irvine once this year, posting a four-game win over the Lasers on March 28.

Pierce has advanced to the State Championship match the past two seasons, losing to Golden West in 1999 before defeating the Rustlers in five games in a thrilling final last April at Irvine Valley College. Behind a 62-kill performance from Lance Walker, the Brahmas twice rallied from one-game deficits to beat Golden West by scores of 12-15, 15-12, 5-15, 17-16, and 15-9. Walker has moved on to Pepperdine, but the Brahmas have retooled around setter Dave Kniffin, a transfer from Loyola Marymount, and outside hitters Dhiraj Coates, Eric Gomez, and Brandon Butchart. One word of warning for Brahma fans: the last time Pierce finished the regular season undefeated, in 1994, they were beaten in the state championship match . . . by Orange Coast.

Orange Coast won five state championships between 1987 and 1994, but in recent years have seen district rival Golden West steal their spotlight with five titles in the last six years. The Pirates will try to advance to their final title match since 1997 and win an unprecedented sixth state championship. The Pirates are led by outside hitters B.J. Lightvoet and Soren Schneider, middle blocker Ryan Owens, and setter Nick Ptaschinski.

Despite the dominance of Pierce and Orange Coast throughout the season, history indicates that there is no great advantage in entering the tournament as a top seed. Five of the past seven state champions did not come in as the top seed from their conference. The rally-point scoring system implemented this year adds another element that makes upsets more feasible. Who will wear the crown? We'll find out next week.

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