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Torrey Pines takes title at California Challenge tourney

It's a repeat for Torrey Pines in a volleyball victory over Marin Catholic, the team the Falcons beat in the Open Division State Championship in 2019

BY TERRY MONAHAN
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CARLSBAD — Sitting in the stands after securing a berth in the championship bracket finals of the California Challenge volleyball tournament, Torrey Pines High watched as top-ranked Cathedral Catholic battled for the other berth.

But the No. 2 Falcons were a bit shocked when Marin Catholic upended Cathedral to set up a long-awaited rematch.

Torrey Pines captured its first Open Division state championship in 2019, the last time a postseason was played, against Marin Catholic.

Torrey Pines also won the rematch with a 26-24, 19-25, 15-10 victory over the Wildcats in Saturday's finals at La Costa Canyon High.

“Facing Marin was a big deal for me,” Torrey Pines coach Brennan Dean said. “It brought back so many classic moments from the state title.”

But Marin (5-1) was the first team to reach 16 points in both of the first two sets, losing the first set with a 19-8 outburst by the Falcons (6-1) but claiming the second set with a 7-2 finish.

That set up the decisive third set, and the Falcons trailed 7-4 before grabbing the lead for good at 11-10 in the midst of a 6-0 run to the title.

“Down 16-7, we figured we’d gotten this far,” said senior setter Brooklyn Burns, named the tournament’s MVP after collecting two kills and six blocks. “There was a sense of panic, but the coaches reminded us we’re good and to take a deep breath.

“Coach always says just keep the balloon off the floor and you’ll be fine.”

Burns was joined by teammates Kat Lutz, a junior libero, and senior outside hitter Hannah Flannery on the all-tournament team.

This was a promotion for Burns, a playoff call-up for that state title run.

She runs the show now.

“Sitting on the bench watching how Carly Diehl ran the team in 2019, I learned a lot about setting watching her,” Burns said. “She sets a new standard of setters.

“Nothing bothers her on the court. I’ve tried to copy that.

“I just wanted to replicate what she did ... trust my teammates.”

Torrey Pines defeated Santa Margarita 25-21, 25-21 in Saturday’s quarterfinals and then eliminated San Clemente 25-15, 25-23 in the semifinals.

Flannery led the Falcons in the finals with eight kills, a block and two aces. Claire Deller had four kills and three blocks.

“I was happy with the way the girls dealt with adversity,” Dean said. “I told them their mood was not right to win.”

Marin Catholic downed Mountain View St. Francis 25-17, 25-18 in the quarters before ousting Cathedral Catholic 25-15, 25-20 to draw Torrey Pines in the finals.

Led by Kelsey Ramsey’s nine kills, one block and an ace in the finals, the Wildcats could not slow down the relentless Falcons.

Four Wildcats started that state championship match two years ago.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

California Challenge

Championship bracket

At La Costa Canyon HS

Quarterfinals

San Clemente def. San Marcos 25-23, 17-25, 19-17

Torrey Pines def. Santa Margarita 25-21, 25-21

Marin Catholic def. Mountain View St. Francis 25-17, 25-18

Cathedral Catholic def. Eastlake 25-11, 25-20

Semifinals

Torrey Pines def. San Clemente 25-15, 25-23

Marin Catholic def. Cathedral Catholic 25-27, 25-17, 15-12

Consolation

Santa Margarita def. San Marcos 17-25, 25-20, 20-18

Eastlake def. Mountain View St. Francis 22-25, 26-24, 15-12

Consolation Finals

Eastlake def. Santa Margarita 25-19, 25-15

Championship Finals

Torrey Pines def. Marin Catholic 26-24, 19-25, 15-10

Silver bracket

At La Costa Canyon HS

Finals

La Costa Canyon def. Del Norte 25-18, 25-18

Bronze bracket

At San Marcos HS

Santa Fe Christian def. Canyon Crest 25-10, 28-26

Notable: Junior libero Kat Lutz, senior outside hitter Hannah Flannery and senior setter Brooklyn Burns of Torrey Pines were named to the championship bracket's all-tournament team. Burns was named the MVP.