

Avocado West girls volleyball has familiar feel



Torrey Pines senior Megan Kraft
(Ken Grosse)

By KEN GROSSE
AUG. 14, 2019

8:53 AM

It's practically a rite of fall when it comes to San Diego high school girls' volleyball. Pencil in Torrey Pines to win the Avocado West League and while you're at it, make sure to include them among the small handful of contenders to win the CIF Open Division championship.

Rival coach Rachel Morris, starting her second year at the controls of Torrey Pines' primary Avocado West adversary La Costa Canyon, is well aware of what her club is up against in terms of the league race and beyond. While obviously not ready to concede an inch to the Falcons without a fight, she knows her spikers are staring down a formidable obstacle.

"Torrey Pines is really well-coached and has a tradition of success," says Morris. "That experience alone kind of earns them the favorite's role.

“But we definitely have experience as well and it wasn’t that long ago that LCC was the most respected volleyball program in San Diego. This year’s LCC team wants to regain that respect and I feel that we can be a tough team—right up there with anybody.

After garnering three of the eight Open Division berths last season and having loop champion Torrey Pines capture its seventh section title in eight years, the Avocado West can reasonably lay claim to being the best league in San Diego.

Here’s a quick rundown on five of the six Avo West schools (minus Mission Hills) in the order of last year’s finish. Each school’s 2019 overall record in parentheses.

TORREY PINES (33-4)

Anybody planning to challenge the Falcons’ supremacy better have plenty of weapons because ninth-year Head Coach Brennan Dean’s squad is loaded again—with both talent and depth. TP graduated three starters, all playing at NCAA D-I schools this fall, but returns six seniors, who all possess D-I offers, in addition to a high quality transfer.

After dishing out 550 assists last season, 5-11 Yale-bound Carly Diehl will handle one of the setting slots in Dean’s 6-2 offense. Delayne Maple and Maya Satchell will be a pair of 5-11 bookends at outside hitter, 6-1 Megan Kraft is slated to start at opposite and 6-2 Trinity Durfee should run one of the middle blocker positions. Combined, those four were responsible for 827 kills, 178 blocks and 411 digs in 2019.

Junior transfer Sophia Callahan piled up 709 assists and 221 digs for 29-9 Xavier Prep of Palm Desert as a sophomore. She figures to slide seamlessly into the second setting position when eligible in mid-September.

“We should be really good,” judged Dean. “Our defense and ball control should be excellent but we’re not super big.

“I’ll be concerned about how we manage things when we come up against a team with a future D-I type who could go through our block, so that’s a question mark.”

The Falcons will get a stiff test early as they open on the road against Cathedral Catholic, August 29. The Dons, who Dean says “are probably better than us right now,” split two regular season match-ups with TP last year but Torrey Pines won the rubber match, 3-1, in the CIF title contest.