

Senior Maya Satchell key component on No. 1-ranked Torrey Pines volleyball squad



Torrey Pines senior Maya Satchell
By KEN GROSSE, SEP. 12, 2019

The defending CIF champion Torrey Pines girls' volleyball team has a roster full of luminaries. Even in that cast of standouts, it's not difficult to notice 5-11 outside hitter Maya Satchell. The senior standout is a constant threat whether pounding from different angles on the left side, exploding out of the back row or launching a dangerous serve. After transferring from Corona del Mar High School in Orange County, Satchell compiled 254 kills, 68 digs and 33 blocks as a junior in 2018 when Torrey Pines posted a 33-4 record on the way to the section title. She's already racked up 65 kills and 12 aces for the undefeated (10-0) Falcons this fall.

Words that come to mind quickly when one encounters Satchell off the court are poise and intelligence. Comfortable, thoughtful and confident, she could easily be mistaken for a college senior rather than a yet to graduate prep player. Veteran Torrey Pines Head Coach Brennan Dean knows Satchell has the whole package.

"Maya's a great attacker, a very aggressive server and really bright," says Dean. "She's also a hard worker who's not afraid to spend time in the gym and get better. She's extremely bright and will likely be playing at an Ivy League institution next season."

As her team prepares to lock horns with Avocado West League rival La Costa Canyon Friday, Satchell shared her thoughts on assimilating to Torrey Pines as a junior, the pressure involved with being part of such a successful program and the important role defense plays on this year's team.

Q—You played soccer at a highly competitive level for years prior to taking up indoor volleyball in seventh grade. How did volleyball become your sport of choice?

SATCHELL—Soccer was always something I had just done from year-to-year so I just kept doing it. It got to a point where I kind of thought to myself ‘I don’t know if I truly love soccer.’

With volleyball, I love the speed. You score more quickly and each point is like a new start, a new beginning. In soccer, you score one goal and there might be one more in the entire game. I just like the speed and pace of volleyball so much better.

Q—How quickly did your volleyball skills grow?

SATCHELL—I was always around players I looked up to, learned from them, kept playing, worked and got as many touches as I could. I kept improving and around my sophomore year at Corona del Mar finally started seeing that “maybe I can make something out of this.”



Satchell attacks the block in the 3-1 Falcon win over Cathedral Catholic.

Q—Your sophomore year ended with a first round loss to Torrey Pines in the CIF State Championship tournament. Ironically, you ended up playing at Torrey Pines the next season. How did that occur?

SATCHELL—My family moved to San Diego for a variety of reasons and we started looking at schools in the area. I wanted a school that was strong academically. There were a lot of factors that led me to Torrey Pines. The academics are very, very good, I do journalism and their school newspaper is ranked very high nationally and, of course, the volleyball program was outstanding.

Q—How difficult was it to acclimate to your new surroundings?

SATCHELL—It was fairly easy to acclimate. Being on the volleyball team, we started practicing early in August so I immediately had a close group of 16 new friends. Demographically, Torrey Pines and Corona Del Mar are very similar but the culture of the two communities is different.

Torrey Pines is a bigger school which I like. There are more sports and more people to become friends with which is always nice.

Torrey Pines also has a real family atmosphere. You don’t get that at too many schools. It starts with volleyball and it’s not just the players on the varsity team but everybody in the program. We all hang out together and it’s a tight knit family which is hard to find. It definitely comes from the coaches.

Q—You mentioned the importance of academics in your decision-making process. How has that worked out?

SATCHELL—It’s been great. I really love the teachers I’ve had at Torrey Pines. They are truly incredible people both in the classroom and after class. They open their hearts to the students and want them to succeed in all facets of their lives. They’re such a valuable commodity.

Q—What can you share about your journalism work at Torrey Pines?

SATCHELL—I'm the opinion section editor on staff of the student newspaper, The Falconer, which comes out monthly. I do both writing and editing and it consumes a lot of my time.

I've worked on a lot of controversial subjects, like the Mueller Report. Last year, with another student, we did two pieces about the school violating San Diego and California recycling laws. The school wasn't putting enough money into recycling which I consider an important issue. We sat down and talked with the school administrators to get background and I felt we did a good job with the articles.

Q—The Torrey Pines girls' volleyball team has won five of the last six CIF Open Division titles and came into the season ranked No. 1 in the section. How much pressure do you feel to win it again?

SATCHELL—I think every single year here teams simply try to do their best. Our team has that same mantra, "play your best." I don't think there's really pressure to win.

That's just the Torrey Pines standard—play at a high level and demonstrate good sportsmanship. Basically, be a "Torrey Pines" team.

We're not always the biggest or biggest name players but we don't necessarily need superstars to succeed—we succeed as a collective group. We have a saying, "entitled to nothing, grateful for everything" and I believe that really describes our team. We all work hard to make each other better.

Q—As a senior, how has your role on the team changed?

SATCHELL—it's hard to lose extremely talented players like Peed Macall, Emily Fitzner and Kendra Ham who graduated but left an incredible mark on all of us. We want to live up to that standard and legacy.

We have 10 new players on the team and as a senior you want to be a leader and set a standard like the past seniors set for us.

Q—What can you say about the various offensive weapons this year's team possesses?

SATCHELL—One of our biggest strengths is that we don't rely on just one player. Our setter Carly Diehl, who is a rock, has confidence in all of our hitters. Megan (Kraft) on the right, two incredible middles in transition and Delaynie (Maple) and I can always be found at the net or out of the back row. There are plenty of options.

I think it really is a team effort. Everybody works hard and brings our team together. No matter what we do individually, the focus is always on the team.

Q—Offense may get the most attention but defense seems to be the foundation of everything you do. How much does the team work on defense and how much emphasis does the coaching staff put on it?

SATCHELL—Defense is one of the core elements of our program and the staff emphasizes it a lot. We are constantly hearing Coach Dean reminding us "defense, defense..." The idea of defense being central to success is a mindset. Our coaches say "defense is 20% skill and 80% mindset. That is true on our team.