

Torrey Pines girls' volleyball turns tables on LCC with 3-0 home victory



Senior Megan Kraft had a match high 16 kills.
By KEN GROSSE SEP. 27, 2019

A lot can change in 12 days. On Sept. 13 in Carlsbad, the La Costa Canyon girls volleyball team whacked then-No. 1-ranked Torrey Pines, 3-0, handing the Falcons their first loss of the season. In Wednesday night's rematch in Del Mar, it was the same 3-0 score but this time Torrey Pines had the upper hand—in a big way. Talk about your turnarounds.

Led by senior Megan Kraft's match high 16 kills and four blocks, the Falcons put the hammer down from the opening serve and never really let up. They hit a blazing .442 as a team, compared to a paltry .165 in the first meeting and ripped eight aces while cutting their service errors in half (6 to 13).

"They looked like themselves again and played really clean on our end," said Head Coach Brennan Dean of his side, which improved its overall record to 18-2 and 2-1 in Avocado West League play. "We really studied what they did to us last time and tried to make some adjustments to help ourselves out. Our girls did a really good job implementing the scouting plan so I'm proud of them."



Torrey Pines junior Sophia Callahan gets a wide open look.

Torrey Pines jumped out to leads of 9-3 and 14-6 in the first set while breezing to a 25-14 decision. The home team players came out ready, reacted positively to the atmosphere provided by an animated crowd and had Dean pushing them from the sidelines.

“We did some simple defensive things, putting some kids in different spots kind of reacting to a heat map of where they were dropping balls on us,” said Dean, whose team is now ranked No. 2 in the section behind Cathedral Catholic, an opponent they have already beaten twice. “We created some different match-ups and focused on some things we knew LCC would be trying to do to us.

“Our players went out there and fought but did a nice job of playing looser and not getting uptight about making mistakes.” The two foes swapped points early in the second game but the Falcons opened a six-point edge at 11-5. LCC pushed back and twice got to within three but TP repelled both advances on the way to winning, 25-21.



Avry Tatum racked up eight kills for LCC.

Senior Sophia Tulino opened the third set by serving three consecutive points for the Mavericks but Torrey retaliated with three straight of its own. La Costa Canyon regained a three-point advantage, 12-9, but the Falcons stormed back, a Kraft backhanded cut shot made it 17-14 TP and forced LCC to call a time out. There were no answers, however, as the Falcons closed it out, tallying eight of the final 10 points.

There were plenty of motivating factors for Torrey Pines, the biggest being the stunning sweep 12 days earlier. "That was a big shock but I think we came in a little overconfident in that first match," said senior setter Carly Diehl who dished out 41 assists while spreading out her sets and creating frequent one-on-one match-ups with the LCC block. "This time we were more prepared, came out with more energy, stayed consistent and stayed confident."



LCC middle blocker Taylor Putnam looks for a hole in the Torrey Pines block.

In addition to Kraft, the Falcons got 12 kills from senior Maya Satchell and 11 from junior Sophia Callahan who missed the first meeting between the two schools. Steady senior Delaynie Maple had another solid all-around night, collecting six kills, 10 digs and two aces in addition to making several spectacular defensive plays.

"They're our rivals so we always have a desire to beat them," said Kraft. "We knew the league was on the line. Winning the Avocado West League is one of our team goals and we needed to win this one to stay in it."

For Coach Rachel Morris and La Costa Canyon, the challenge will be similar to that which faced Torrey Pines following their loss two weeks ago. "We knew they would be highly emotional and knew they would be on the attack," said Morris, whose Mavs now sport a 16-11 overall ledger and are 1-1 in Avo West contests. "We talked about not being backed into a corner and having to claw our way out."



Senior setter Carly Diehl had the Torrey Pines offense running on all cylinders.

“But we never found our own rhythm on our side of the court and just weren’t playing our style of volleyball. We didn’t pass well, weren’t working hard blocking-wise and got really predictable, which is not normal. We came out with a very different attitude than we did when we met them at our gym.” LCC freshman Avry Tatum recorded a team best eight kills and the Mavericks hit .247 on the night, about the same as they did in the first outing vs. TP.

With their own series now completed, Wednesday’s two combatants will now be focused on the remaining Avocado West schedule. Next up for both La Costa Canyon and Torrey Pines is San Marcos. The Mavericks will be on the road Monday (Sept. 30) against the dangerous Knights, a team that is 19-2 but has faced a much less daunting schedule than either of its upcoming adversaries. San Marcos travels to Torrey Pines on Wednesday (Oct. 2).

Having avenged one of their two defeats, the sense at Torrey Pines is that the ship has been righted. “I do think we’re in a really good spot,” observed Dean. “We just need to stay consistent and not come out flat.

“We’ve done that twice and took two losses. Teams are too good now for us to have one of those off days and expect to come away with a win. It’s on me to find ways to keep them prepared and continue to work to find the right formulas.”

Kraft shared the team perspective which, as one would expect, sounded similar to Dean’s thoughts. “We have a good mindset right now,” Kraft said. “We know that no team is unbeatable. We know we need to work hard to get every win. We know that Coach Dean will have us well-prepared.”