

The quiz before the test

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West Ranch volleyball sweeps, but has bigger challenge next

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Posted: Nov. 11, 2008 10:07 p.m.

POSTED Nov. 12, 2008 4:55 a.m.

In its first-ever playoff home match, the West Ranch girls volleyball team was triumphant.

The Wildcats defeated Calvary Chapel, the Orange Coast's No. 3 finisher, in the first round of CIF-Southern Section Division I-A playoffs 26-24,25-21,25-19.

"We knew what we had to do and we just wanted to have fun." said West Ranch outside hitter Allison Summers. "This is the best we have played in a long time."

Summers finished the contest with a team high 17 kills and 15 digs.

"As a captain I have to help the team as much as I can. If I do my part everyone else will do theirs," Summers said.

Summers' final kill in the third set sealed the win for the Wildcats. It marked the first time, under West Ranch head coach Nate Sparks, that the Wildcats have advanced to the second round of CIF-SS playoffs.

In 2007, West Ranch was knocked out in the first round by Nipomo High and this year.

"One of our main goals going into this season was to go further into playoffs," Sparks said. "We have more experience and the team chemistry is a lot better."

But now comes the test.

West Ranch will face perennial powerhouse Dos Pueblos of Goleta on Thursday at a site to be determined by a coin flip.

Dos Pueblos swept the Foothill League champion Valencia Vikings in an earlier season matchup and finished undefeated in the Channel League.

However, Sparks remains hopeful.

"I like our chances. If we play our game and stay focused we have a good chance of coming out on top," Sparks said. "If we get ourselves mentally prepared we can compete."

On Tuesday, in a contest with numerous momentum shifts, West Ranch never faltered.

"Overall I think we played decent," said Calvary Chapel head coach Paul Woo. "We made too many little mistakes that cost us, but we battled."

It was an all-Wildcats show in the third set as the team closed out Calvary Chapel in quick fashion.

"This was a big game for the girls," Sparks said. "We played with fire."

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