

Valencia, Granada Hills girls' volleyball shine in Redondo playoffs

By Erik Boal, Special to the Daily News

Updated: 10/31/2009 11:14:26 PM PDT

REDONDO BEACH - It took a trip to the two-day Redondo Power Classic to confirm their beliefs, but Valencia and Granada Hills learned their strengths could match up against some of the top girls' volleyball teams in Southern California.

Unfortunately for area powers La Canada, Flintridge Sacred Heart of La Ca ada Flintridge and West Ranch of Stevenson Ranch, they had some weaknesses uncovered Saturday that need to be addressed before the Southern Section playoffs begin.

Although Valencia and Granada Hills were placed in the same pool Friday with champion Redondo Union, they both responded with impressive performances Saturday.

Valencia, behind all-tournament picks Katie Hank and Heidi Brown, defeated both LaCanada and Flintridge Sacred Heart by 25-20, 25-23 scores to reach the Gold Bracket semifinals, before losing 25-23, 25-14 to Redondo Union.

"I'm proud of the way the girls played," Vikings coach Ray Sanchez said. "They played really well and barring a few errors here and there, they could've won. Redondo is a great team, but I like the fact that my girls are a little bitter about losing because they felt like they could've beaten them."

The Sea Hawks, who also defeated Valencia 25-12, 25-18 in pool play Friday, rode the play of MVP Lara Dykstra to outlast El Dorado of Placentia 14-25, 25-20, 15-11 in the final.

But Valencia's efforts against Redondo, especially in the first game of the semifinals, demonstrated

Advertisement

Ads by pulse360

A photograph showing a hand holding a small pile of dark, round acai berries.	A portrait of a woman with long, reddish-brown hair.
<p>Acai Berry EXPOSED (Official Test) This Weight Loss Special Report Will Shock You! More info...</p>	<p>Los Angeles - Mom Lost 47lbs Following 1 Rule I Cut Down 47 lbs of Stomach Fat In A Month By Obeying This 1 Old Rule</p>

how much they've improved in the past month.

And a big reason why has been the play of freshman setter Carly Carapella, who was inserted into the starting lineup in the fourth game of an Oct. 6 loss to rival West Ranch and hasn't left since.

"This was good practice to see what our level is and how far we're going to be able to go (in the playoffs),"

said Carapella, who had 53 assists Saturday. "It was a huge difference (in competition). But we have a good team and we all do our parts and we all love the game. This challenged us, but we had a good time. It was a lot of fun."

Hank, a 6-foot-2 talent headed to Delaware, finished with 35 kills Saturday, excelling in head-to-head matchups with Lehigh-bound Courtney McCutchan of La Canada and Flintridge Sacred Heart junior Camille Coffey.

"There were some really good teams here, but we played hard and showed we can compete with them," Hank said. "We knew it was going to be tough competition, but we learned we can compete with these teams."

Granada Hills, led by Amber Hawthorne and Hanna Levanen, rebounded from pool-play losses Friday to Redondo Union and Valencia to win the Silver Bracket title.

The Highlanders defeated Independence of Bakersfield 25-16, 25-23, and El Segundo 20-25, 25-21, 15-12, en route to the final, where they handled North Torrance 25-12, 25-16.

La Canada, Flintridge Sacred Heart and West Ranch all lost twice in the Gold Bracket. Thousand Oaks recovered from a first-round 25-16, 18-25, 15-13 loss to West Torrance to defeat Garces of Bakersfield 25-21, 20-25, 16-14, and La Jolla 22-25, 25-22, 15-9 to finish ninth.