

Pacific Lutheran girls volleyball team gets school's 1st CIF crown

By Erica Metzler, Correspondent
Posted: 11/21/2009 12:18:22 AM PST

The Pacific Lutheran players could just taste it - a monumental victory that they were so close to capturing.

With the Stingrays leading 24-23 in the fourth game against Baker Valley in the CIF Southern Section Division V-A girls volleyball final, the crowd rose to its feet and raised one finger, signifying one more point.

Baker Valley served the ball into the net and watched as Pacific Lutheran players and staff stormed the court as they celebrated a 25-17, 24-26, 25-17, 25-23 victory at Cypress College.

The win capped a historic playoff run for the Stingrays (19-5-1), as they became the first team to win a CIF title in the school's 14-year history.

"It's incredible," senior setter Anais Marin said. "Right now I can't believe it. I am completely surprised. We wanted this more than any other time."

Pacific Lutheran looked sharp and poised in Game 1. Its effective communication helped propel it to a fast start and easy 25-17 victory. It also helped that Baker Valley had 10 unforced errors, which turned into Stingray points.

Sophomore Chrissy Hessing had six of her 10 kills in Game 1 and Bridgette Kielhack added four kills and two aces. She finished with 14 kills and three aces.

There was a bit of miscommunication during Game 2 and it was evident that some of the players were getting frustrated on the floor.

"Our girls got a little snippy with each other," Pacific Lutheran coach Don Bareford said.

"When they got that under control, we made that comeback in Game 2."

Said Kielhack: "When we were down, everyone started getting frustrated, but we were able to pick ourselves up."

Down, 24-18, Pacific Lutheran had a six-point comeback to tie the game, but couldn't quite get the win. But Bareford indicated that six-point comeback was the difference-maker and momentum changer to the match.

"Volleyball is a game of momentum and the second game was very witness to that," Bareford said. "They took control and we went into a slump, but our goal was to try and get back in it."

"We weren't necessarily thinking that we could win it, but at least come away with the momentum going into Game 3."

Pacific Lutheran cruised to a 25-17 victory in Game 3 with the leadership of Marin, who had three key kills. She finished with eight kills, two aces and six assists.

"We have been there when we have been up, 2-1," Bareford said. "These girls are very good at finishing matches and I thought they showed that right at the end. It could have gone either way, but they somehow manage to win these squeakers."