Headline: Trinity volleyball advances in playoffs with sweep over HMSA

Deckhead: Knights jump out to big leads in each game to propel them to victory

By Ryan Posner

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The maximum capacity at the gym at the Henry Mayo Fitness and Health Center is 665.

The crowd for Trinity Classical Academy’s first-round playoff matchup against Hawthorne Math and Science Academy didn’t have the fire marshall sweating.

But the echoing roar from the 100-plus people on hand led to miscommunications aplenty for the Aviators as Trinity cruised to a sweep (25-9, 25-12, 25-19) on Tuesday afternoon.

“We have a pretty unique home environment so it was nice to be in a familiar place to open the playoffs,” said Knights coach Rebecca Peluffo. “ … We were really taking care of our serve and our readiness on returns was phenomenal.”

The Knights will get to reap the rewards of their home environment for a second straight contest when they host Malibu on Thursday in the second round of the CIF-Southern Section Division 8 playoffs.

Trinity jumped out to an 8-0 lead in the first game, which would be a common occurrence throughout the match. They opened the second game with a 5-0 lead and the third game with a 7-0 lead.

“We knew it was going to be important to get out to big leads like that because it’s a playoff match and you’re not really familiar with your opponent,” said Kathryn Brooks, who led the Knights with 20 assists and six aces. “We put an emphasis on coming out with the same energy that we would for any of our rivals.”

Carissa Bixler had a team-high eight kills and Hannah Caddow added seven kills and seven digs.

The Knights watched a 7-0 lead in the third game nearly evaporate after the Aviators followed with a 5-0 run of their own. Trinity never trailed during the match, though, finishing out the third game on a 10-4 run after the Aviators cut its lead to 15-14 at one point.

“I think we handled our emotions pretty well today,” Caddow said. “Now that we’re in the playoffs you never know when it might be your last game. Getting out to those leads really helped settle us down and let us just play our game.”

Heidi Schafer led the Knights with eight digs and Julia Carver tallied seven digs. Carver put the third game away when the Aviators deflected her serve backwards and out of bounds. \_