

El Camino women's volleyball team survives a major scare

By Forrest Lee, Correspondent

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Lauren Edwards figured Irvine Valley College would be a handful. She didn't count on the Lasers, though, pushing the Warriors to the limit.

"Oh my goodness. We were expecting them to be tough, but not that tough," Edwards said.

Second-seeded El Camino turned back an upset bid by 10th-seeded Irvine Valley, prevailing 23-25, 25-18, 25-19, 15-25, 15-13 in the quarterfinals of the Southern California Regional women's volleyball playoffs Saturday night at El Camino.

A shot by Irvine Valley outside hitter Allison Cook sailed wide, allowing the Warriors to advance to the regional semifinals, where they will meet Grossmont, which defeated Pasadena, Tuesday at 6p.m. at El Camino.

Edwards, who finished with 12 kills and 14 digs, said the Warriors' will helped conquer the pesky Lasers in the end.

"We just wanted it more. We were kind of shaky in the fifth game, but we went back to the basics with our passing, which broke down in the fourth game, and pulled it together in the end," said Edwards, a former West Torrance High standout.

Edwards and Tarryn Luafalemana, a freshman middle blocker from Carson who recorded a match-high 19 kills and and seven blocks, led the Warriors against the Lasers, but they got a valuable lift from freshman outside hitter Katie

Child (Peninsula), who came off the bench to record 11 kills.

Her biggest one, though, came in the fifth game, giving El Camino (23-2) the lead at 14-13 before Cook's

errant shot capped the match.

"Katie came up with a gutsy play," El Camino coach Le Valley Pattison said. "That was huge."

The Warriors' passing game also came through when they needed it most.

"We broke down passing in game four, but came back in the fifth game and passed well," Pattison said. "It was an exciting match. It could have gone either way."

The Lasers (15-6), who advanced to the second round by surprising seventh-seeded Moorpark in a sweep on Tuesday, dictated the match early on. After winning the first game, they jumped on the Warriors in the second one for a 9-4 lead before Pattison called a timeout.

"We were trying, but we were trying a little bit too hard," Pattison said. "This team doesn't play well when they're tight. They play much better when they're relaxed and play a little faster."

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They loosened up. And they responded and didn't make so many unforced errors.

"Unforced errors were killing us."

From that point on, El Camino limited its miscues and played much better. It also helped the Warriors claim the second and third games before the errors of their ways returned in the fourth game, which the Lasers dominated. Irvine Valley sealed it with a kill and three consecutive aces by middle blocker Emily Mount.

In the final game, Irvine Valley led 9-8 before a shot by Sinead O'Neill landed long to tie the score at 10. The two teams exchanged points until Child delivered to give El Camino the lead for good.

"The key was not to make mistakes and keep the ball in play," Edwards said. "We kept fighting back. We had to stop them and not waver. We did that and that allowed us to prevail."

Keely Stevenson (El Segundo High) led El Camino with 24 digs, while Sarah McFadden finished with 51 assists. El Camino's Nigeria Owens recorded 4 blocks.



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