



# MENDOCINO-LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 31, 2017

Contact: Jessica Silva, Director of Community Relations & Communication  
Phone/Email: 707.468.3012/jsilva@mendocino.edu

## **EAGLES HOST THE MENDOCINO CLASSIC TOURNAMENT**

**Written by: Joe Langstaff**

On Wednesday afternoon, the Mendocino College women's volleyball team hosted the Mendocino Classic four-team crossover tournament which included teams from Lassen, Los Medanos and Siskiyou Colleges and the host Mendocino Eagles.

Each team played two matches, one each against one of the other three teams. The first matches started at 2 p.m., with the Eagles playing Lassen College and Los Medanos playing College of the Siskiyous.

At the completion of those two matches, following by break period, the second two matches of the afternoon were played, featuring Mendocino vs. Siskiyou and Lassen going against Los Medanos.

During conference play later in the season, teams will normally play just one match in a day and two matches in a week. So this event and similar other pre-conference events allow teams the opportunity to get "more bang for their buck," so to speak, by playing two matches in one day, a better bargain for the teams that have to travel.

It also allows the players to potentially double their playing time per day of match action. That's especially valuable to freshman players new to college-level play. It also gives the coaches added opportunity to evaluate players and use different combinations of players prior to the start of conference play.

Unlike community college soccer which has a relatively long pre-conference schedule with conference play not beginning until September 22, volleyball begins conference play a week and a half earlier on September 13, less than two weeks away.

The Eagles will play in a similar tournament this Friday at Lassen College and then at Skyline College next Friday and Saturday, September 8 and 9.

The Eagles will open Bay Valley Conference play at Napa on the 13<sup>th</sup>, playing the Napa Valley College Storm.

As for results of Wednesday's Classic matches, Los Medanos emerged with two wins, Lassen and Siskiyou came away with splits, while the host Eagles dropped two matches.

In the first-round pair of matches at 2 p.m., Los Medanos bested Siskiyou in a five-game match, 3-2 (25-23, 23-25, 25-21, 28-30 and 15-12) and Lassen topped the Eagles in a four-game match by three games to one (25-27, 25-21, 26-24, 25-15)



# MENDOCINO-LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

In the 4 p.m. pairings it was Los Medanos over Lassen 3-1 (25-18, 19-25, 25-23, 25-13) and Siskiyou's topping the Eagles 3-0 (25-15, 25-20, 25-20).

Prior to Wednesday's matches the Eagles added two players to the roster in the person of Regan Wyatt, a freshman from Ukiah High and Katelyn Lieding, a freshman from Davis High, currently living in Willits.

Those two additions were a big plus for the Eagles who had expected a large group of returners from last year's squad to add to new recruits this year. Last year's team had one of the best seasons in recent Mendocino volleyball history.

However, when preseason practice began a couple weeks ago, there were only two returners from last year's team; sophomore outside hitter Aliza Atkins (Clear Lake High) and sophomore setter Lily Mendoza (Ukiah High). Both were key contributors to last year's team.

Joining them this year were four new players to the team: freshman libero and defensive specialist Isabel Gutierrez (Willits High), freshman middle blocker Solana Mirata (Ukiah High), freshman outside hitter Kami Swinney (Ukiah High) and outside hitter Rylie Loflin, a first-year volleyball player and a freshman eligibility wise in the sport, but also having played a year with both the Eagles softball and women's basketball teams, now a sophomore in those sports.

The addition of Wyatt and Lieding gives the Eagles some badly-needed depth. Even with them available Wednesday, the Eagles were still outnumbered in terms of number of players. In addition to having six players on the court, the other three teams each had four to six players on the bench.

As might be expected with fewer players, the Eagles played with a lot of energy early on the long afternoon, but appeared to tire a bit as the games piled up. Looking sharp in the early going, they committed more unforced errors as the day proceeded. No doubt, fatigue played a big factor.

As their season progresses they will no doubt increase their stamina, but the "numbers" factor will probably linger throughout the season, playing against teams with larger rosters.

But early on Wednesday in their first match against Lassen, the Eagles showed that they are capable of playing good competitive volleyball. Lassen jumped out to an early lead in game one, but the Eagles fought back and took their first lead 10-9 on an ace by Loflin. Gutierrez followed with an ace and Mirata got a block.

The Eagles had a lead for a few points, followed by a couple ties and then Lassen going up 21-19. At which point coach Billy Offill called a timeout, with he and assistant coach Kahli Remy discussing strategy with the players.

They battled back to tie at 21, fell behind 21-24, tied at 24 and then at 25. They went up 26-25 on an Atkins block and then got the winning point when Lassen was called for going over the net, the Eagles winning the game 27-25.

The second game was another back-and-forth nail biter, with narrow lead changes and multiple tied scores. A



# MENDOCINO-LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

cross-court tip by Swinney put the Eagles up 18-15. Lassen tied the game at 18-18. The Eagles took 1-point leads on kills by Mirata and Atkins, before Lassen tied the score at 20. An Atkins kill gave the Eagles their last lead of the game 21-20. But five Eagles' errors gave Lassen the next five points and the game 25-21.

The third game was much like the first two, tight and hard fought. Lassen held a lead though the midpoint. The Eagles caught up and went up by a couple points, leading 19-17. Lassen edged ahead, but the Eagles caught them and tied the score at 24, before Lassen managed to win the final two points.

Game four saw Lassen jump out to a 12-4 lead against Eagles who were beginning to look fatigued. Lassen was able to maintain that margin, a couple times extending the led to 10 points and winning by a final score of 25-15 to clinch the match.

Later in the afternoon, against Siskiyous the Eagles the Eagles took an early lead in game one, but soon fell behind by double digits and lost 25-15.

They fell behind in game two, but rallied to go ahead 12-11 and extended the lead to 15-11 and still led 19-15 later in the game. But Siskiyous tied at 19 and outscored the Eagles 6-1 the rest of the way to win 25-20.

Again looking fatigued in game three, the Eagles trailed from the start and were down 20-12 when their coaches called a timeout. Showing good character and a fight-to-the-end spirit, they rallied to close to 21-19, raising hope of extending the match to a game four.

But Siskiyous was able to hold on and win by a final score of 25-20 and secure a 3-0 match win.

Coach Offill was pleased with how the crossover tournament went. "We had good teams and a great tournament. We had a good turnout and a great crowd. Now we have some matches under our belt. We're still working on our chemistry. Chemistry is not manufactured. Some teams have five or six sophomores. We have two. The chemistry will come as we play more together.

"We saw a strong game from Aliza. Kami Swinney from Ukiah had a nice debut. She played well. Her finishes were solid. She didn't make many mistakes. She had some blocks. Last year Lily split reps with Jamie (Mertle). This year she's going to be our go-to setter. It's going to be a little bit of adjustment.

"For us, it's about getting some experience. Some of our players haven't played since junior high, like Regan. It nice to have (assistant coach) Kahli Remy on board. She does a really good job. She's quite knowledgeable.

"It was a great all-around day for Mendocino volleyball."