

By **Charlie Brande** - Wednesday, November 4th, 2009

Friday marks a special day in every Newport Harbor High and Corona del Mar girls' volleyball player's season. The annual Battle of the Bay is always one to remember for not only varsity players but the younger teams too.

With the frosh-soph game starting at 3:30 p.m. in the main gym at Newport Harbor, each frosh-soph team takes the main court for the first time all year. The junior varsity match will follow at 4:30 with varsity starting 20 minutes after the conclusion of the JV match.

Most of these players have competed against or with the players on the other team, for years. The crowds are always outstanding and it is a great way for the regular season to end. This year's match is for cancer awareness. All teams from both schools, will wear pink jerseys and those in the crowd are encouraged to break out their best pink shirts. It has also been labeled as an alumni gathering for both Newport Harbor alumni and Corona del Mar alumni. All proceeds will be donated to the Hoag Hospital Cancer Center. Pink Out!

The history of this rivalry goes back to the beginning of CIF high school girls' volleyball during the mid-70's. Starting with the 1977 CIF final which CdM won in two straight games (they only played two out of three in the 70's). CdM was coached by Kathy Bulmer and led by Dale Keough, Cheryl Johnston, and Aileen Semonson. Newport Harbor's stars were setter phenom Marie Lundie and Karen Olsen. Newport was coached by Judy Fogt..

The next CIF final featuring the two teams was in 1979 when Newport, led by Kari Rush, Kori and Kris Pulaski, beat CdM in three games. Bill Ashen's CdM team featured Marcie Wurts, Suzie Crone, and Sue Corea. These girls all played on the same club team, so it was quite an interesting rivalry.

The 1987 CIF final was a major event. CdM and Newport, in the best division, playing for the CIF championship at Marina High before a crowd of over 4,000 and live television with Chris Marlowe and Paul Sunderland announcing for Prime Ticket.

Dan Glenn's Newport Harbor team had beaten CdM three times during the season including a 15-0 final at the Santa Barbara Tournament when Sienna Curci jump served all 15 points. While Jenny Evans was the defined leader, Newport's overall consistency was its strength with Becky Sherwood, Curci, Marilee Pfister, Kirsten Conklin, Anastasia Arnold, Molly McCray and a little sophomore back-row specialist named Anjanette Gan. Anj's brother, Darryl, is now the coach for Corona del Mar.

Corona's team was also very talented and were led by seniors, Lauri Wooten, Chickie Moiso, Rhonda Schnitger, Shannon Flint, Karen Smith, Shauna Slingsby and Kim Linden, as well as junior standout Laurie Sawin. The crowd, many of whom had their faces painted, were on their feet throughout the match. CdM won the first two games and had a lead in the third before Evans took over, and pulled out the five-game final. This was the most exciting CdM-Newport match to date.

The next CIF final match was even better. Corona del Mar and Coach Lance Stewart had won

the state championship in 1992 and most of his players were back. Setters Kim Coleman and Kristen Campbell, were six-footers who had years of experience. Coupled with Jennifer Stroffe, Caitlin Pickart, Kathryn Rice, Kelly Campbell, as well as Andrea Susson and Tori Hartling in the backcourt, they had rolled through their season.

Newport was nearly as experienced and talented with Misty May and Melissa Schutz leading the way. Jeannette and Julia Hecker, Sara Fairborn, Laura Osborne and Tina Bowman had all started the previous season for Newport. While CdM prevailed in the CIF Southern Section final in four close games, the state Division I final was a barn-burner.

CdM won the first two, but Newport battled back to get the third and fourth games. Corona won 15-10 in the fifth game of a two and a half hour match.

The CIF and state changed the divisions based on enrollment, so there has not been a Battle of the Bay in a championship match since 1993. This only makes their yearly match that much more important.

Season records go out the window with either team capable of beating the rival.

Newport Harbor is ranked No. 1 in CIF Division I-AA, while Corona is ranked No. 2 in Division II-AA. This past weekend at the very powerful Santa Barbara Tournament of Champions, Newport finished fourth while CdM finished fifth. This makes Friday's match even more exciting.

One more story to emphasize the rivalry. The 1984 Corona del Mar team was hammered in the CIF final by a very talented Gahr team (coached by current Long Beach State Coach Brian Gimmillaro) in three games. When they played again in the state final, CdM won in an upset over Gahr, who had nine girls who eventually played Division I college volleyball including two-time Olympian Tara Cross. CdM was led by state Player of the Year Brooke Herrington, as well as Andrea Redick, Cammie Doder, Linda Burton, Cristy Moiso, **Jennifer Noonan** and Jill Harrington. I feel very fortunate to have coached this team. It was a great season and the first state championship for a girls' high school team in the Newport-Mesa area.

Unfortunately, Newport Harbor had beaten CdM both times that they played that season, both times in five games and both times 15-13 in the fifth. Newport was led by Lara Asper, Laura Power and Tracy Krueger. While Corona won the state title, the Sea Kings did not even win the city championship.

What a rivalry! Don't forget to Pink Out.