

KILLIN' IT

IN THEIR 18-2 SEASON, GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TAKE HOME THE DIVISION 2 CHAMPIONSHIP.

STORY BY: YSC3

Shoes squeaked on the gym floors, beads of sweating dripping down their neck, and the varsity girls volleyball team peppered with purpose. The Lizards made their furthest run by claiming the Division 2 CIF Volleyball title. To succeed, athletes trained during the summer.

"Coach Graham put us into a tournament at the [University of] San Diego. We played schools in Northern California, and their teams were taller compared to us. We learned to be more aggressive in our spikes to get the overhead kills, and we scrimmaged with the boys to hit higher. This prepared us for the tall, Tesoro girls at CIF," said Kaitlyn Ma '26.

With a roster including eight new varsity athletes, one being a freshman athlete, the Lizards faced a season of change. The team had their largest roster yet of 22.

"We had a deep bench. In our season opener, Milly Bayle '25, our libero, could not play because she had a transfer sit-out period. Luckily, Miranda Perdomo ['28] because she played the entire game for Milly. Miranda ended up getting the winning point to win the match," said Jane Wood '27.

Despite team aspects changing, coaching approaches also shifted, according to assistant Coach Dereck Zahn, to make this CIF run possible.

"[Our victory was] all hard work and hours [devoted] to the sport, but the energy carried us above everything else. The girls could have been down 18-11 and would still have positive energy. They never let a set defeat them and I really enjoyed seeing [them] so determined after others usually aren't," said Coach Eric Graham.



1

SUMMER STATS

ATHLETES DURING JUNIOR OLYMPICS SET STATISTICAL RECORDS.

- 12 DIGS**
SET BY SARAH KIGESA '25, JUL. 5
- 14% ACES**
SET BY ARDEN SUN '25, AUG. 4
- 21 KILLS**
SET BY LANA NGUYEN '25, AUG. 14



2

WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

GOING AGAINST APPLE GROVE, ATHLETES SECURE THE DIVISION 2 CIF CHAMPIONSHIP ON DEC. 15.

1. ONE TEAM, ONE DREAM

Mariana "Mari" Wang '25 and her team pile together to celebrate winning the Division 2 CIF Championship game against Apple Grove High School. Despite physical and mental challenges throughout the season, athletes put in the hours to earn their victory. "I tore a ligament in my elbow last year, so it was scary to play again this season. However, I went to physical therapy every week and spent extra hours in the gym with Coach Graham so we could have a competitive season," said Wang.

2. STEPPING IT UP

Libero, Cooper Marinelli '28 dives to save a ball from hitting the floor in a close set. With only one freshman on varsity, Marinelli stepped up into their role. "I started playing volleyball when I was about four years old and started playing competitively when I was 12. Being a freshman on the varsity team was intimidating at first but I attended camps and clinics over the years to improve my game, and even reached out to Coach Graham when I was in middle school to ask how I could be an asset to the team," said Marinelli.

level up LIZARDS

MADELYN "MADDIE" MOORE '25 SIGNS TO COMPETE AT THE BIG TEN IN D1 VOLLEYBALL AT UCLA.



"I started the recruitment process the summer before my junior year but did not verbally commit until this past summer. I thought the process would be difficult but my friends and family helped me through it all. I was so grateful for the coaches at UCLA to believe in me and to allow me to be a part of their D1 Volleyball program next year."

OUTSIDE HITTER



3



4



5

IN IT TO WIN IT

LIZARDS WIN GOLD IN THEIR ANNUAL CITRUS TOURNAMENT AGAINST TESORO AND FOOTHILL ON NOV. 12.

3. BETTER TOGETHER Setter, Zoe Wynn '27, sets the ball to outside hitter, Katie Chen '28 in order to achieve a spike and score against Tesoro High School. In a survey conducted by school administration, it was found that participating in sports led to a more fulfilling high school experience. "When I transferred to Lemon High School, I thought the team would not be welcoming but I was wrong. Katie Chen '28 helped me meet the other girls on the volleyball team and we all grew closer. Our team was special because we always had our pepper partners to perfect our game, and also built-in best friends for when we were upset," said Wynn.

4. LEADING WITH PURPOSE Outside hitter and captain, Gabby Gayle '25, cheers after getting a kill. Upperclassmen took on more responsibilities to aid coaches in management. "As captain, I ensured all the girls knew what was expected of them. I sent out practice and game schedules, and hosted team bonding activities. Whenever it was someone's birthday, the team would all buy balloons and a cake to decorate their locker and celebrate their day. I liked my role a lot because I was able to bring the team together and make everyone feel included," said Gayle.

5. PERFECT PRACTICES MAKES PERFECT Middle blockers, Anusha Namburu '26 and Ananya Kim '25, jump up to stop Tesoro from receiving the set-winning point. After multiple injuries and setbacks in seasons prior, the volleyball program underwent summer training days after school. "During tournaments, our team did not have the strongest or the biggest girls, especially as blockers. We did not let this stop us, so we practiced specific drills for our position. Anusha Namburu '26 and I did box jumps. This was beneficial because we were able to get a higher standing vertical when we jumped so our arms would go over the net," said Kim.