

## Thursday: Opening Day Draw Coverage

Abbotsford Christian, the number one seed, opened the BC tournament at the MEI Middle School with a match against number thirteen MacNeill. The Knights, from the east-side of Abbotsford beat the Richmond school in straight sets using all their players in a 25-12, 25-15 win.

Sidney Kornelius # 2 went on a ten-point service run to establish the Knights' dominance. Charity Lee #5 also rose to the challenge with a number of huge digs to keep the Knights on track. Alana De Jong #1 set well in the second set as ACS cruised to victory.

AR MacNeill's setter, Bella Nelstrop #5, went down with an ankle injury in the warm-up which shook up the Ravens who were spirited and unintimidated by the #1 Knights. However, they were over-matched.

St. Michael's University School played DP Todd in their opener, and it was the best match of the morning as it went 3 sets. The Island Champs prevailed 23-25, 25-10, 15-13. D.P. Todd, the Prince George school, and North Central Champions, got out to a fine start with left-handed setter Jasmine Dhillon #3 providing energy and finding left side attacker Shadae Black #8 all over the court. SMUS had no block for the 6'1" hitter as Black found holes from the front and back rows. The opening set had more momentum swings than a pendulum as the teams were tied at 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, and 21. A net call on SMUS at that point led to a 2-point run to make the score 23-21 DP Todd. SMUS coach Bendfeld took a time-out trying to stop the run, but Todd's Reanna Marshall #1 served tough to take the next point and SMUS was on the brink 22-24. A huge block by SMUS ricocheted into an unguarded back court to make it 23-24. The final point was a service error and DP Todd took the first set.

The second set saw an extraordinary reversal of fortunes as SMUS rode a ten-point service run by McKenna Anderson #5 after she had made two crushing kills to go up 20-5. Anderson's run was ended by a cheeky dump by Todd's setter, Dhillon, who found the donut hole in the Blue Jag's defense. The final was a 25-10 thrashing by the Islanders.



*(#7) Kayla Schuurman celebrates with her Abby Christian Teammates. Photo: Ron Peters*

The third set was highlighted by a huge SMUS comeback. Trailing 13-9, Sophie Olcen #10 served six straight to give SMUS the comeback win.

Fourth seeded Langley Fundamental School beat Vancouver's West Point Grey Academy in three sets. The entertaining match pitted a much taller East Valley team against the skilled city squad. WPGA's star senior, Michaela Jefferson, has been offered a scholarship with Georgia State. The 5'8" left side hammers the ball and she was a handful for the Fundy blockers. Fundy stormed back after losing the first set 27-25 to take the next two 25-19 and 15-10. The Titans were well-balanced in their attack and served tough to keep the Wolves scrambling.



*Notre Dames Outside Hitter #10 Olivia Kuna hitting through the Holy Cross Block. Photo: Ron Peters*

The All-Roman Catholic Pool B saw the girls from Vancouver's Notre Dame show their number two seeding with an opening win over Surrey's Holy Cross. Notre Dame, the BC Catholic Tournament Champions, used a combination of spikes and tips to keep Holy Cross off-balance. The Juggler's went on a six-point run to go up 20-13 while the

coaching staff attended to their starting setter's sprained ankle. Holy Cross could not capitalize on the situation, and the team's traded points to finish the set 25-17. Notre Dame's #1, Maisie Phan, a senior, stepped into the setter's role and the Vancouver Sea to Sky champs beat the South Fraser champs in the second set 25-16.

The All-Independent Pool C saw powerful play from York House, seeded 3<sup>rd</sup>, over East Valley's MEI, the 6<sup>th</sup> ranked host, winning two sets 25-19, 25-21. York House's setter, Chloe Ng, is a University of Minnesota Gopher recruit, and she showed why with precision sets to her all her hitters. MEI held the lead for much of the second set, but could not sustain it. The atmosphere was great as many MEI students cheered their team on.

Holy Cross from Surrey beat fellow Catholic school Archbishop Carney from Port Coquitlam and Fraser North #1 in two straight sets 25-20 and 25-19. Coach Byron Green's team played scrappy defense for the victory.

In Pool A action Abby Christian demolished DP Todd 25-6 in the first set. In the classic mental let-down the Knights struggled in the second set and were down 17-9 to the Trojans when they put on a defensive clinic led by the giant blocks of #13 Meghan Vaags and tied it at 17 before winning the match 25-20.

Victoria's SMUS defeated Richmond's MacNeill with ease. The Blue Jags won two straight going 25-21 and 25-18 to set up a final game with Abby Christian for first place in Pool A. Once again, SMUS's grade 11 left side McKenna Anderson scored at will.

Pool D provided some great matches on Day One as the Vancouver Sea to Sky Zone gave the BCs a rematch of the zone's bronze medal game with WPGA and Mulgrave. This time the zone results were reversed as the Mulgrave Titans beat the Wolves in three sets. While Mulgrave had trouble with Michaela Jefferson's and Emily Gibson's back row attacks, the Wolves had difficulty with the Ruse sisters Mia and Eva as they scored frequently. The entertaining match saw each team win 25-19, and the rubber match was 15-11 for the North Shore girls.

Tips, pushes and dumps kept the host Eagles on their heels as Vancouver Island's Brentwood College mastered the taller Mennonites in the first set 25-21. In the second set MEI had a huge comeback win after being down 21-13. The Eagles soared to a 25-23 victory as Kaylee Zacharias had an amazing serve streak to even the match. The third set saw two teams with nervous service as 7/8 serves were out. The TSN turning point was Zacharias's huge kill down the line to put the Eagles up to stay earning a 15-11 win.

In the final match of the day for Abby Christian, the Knights took care of business quickly with a 25-12, 25-14 win. The Knights #9 Eden Kampman had a long service run to put the first game out of reach, and #7 Kayla Schuurman shared the spotlight with senior Lauren Bowman as the pair scored frequently. The Knights looked like a number one seed as they breezed through the competition in their pool.

In Pool B Notre Dame looked like they are destined to meet the Knights on Saturday night as they easily dispatched Archbishop Carney 25-13 and 25-19.

DP Todd finished Pool A's day with a workman-like 25-16, 25-19 win over MacNeill. Shadae Black was too much for the Ravens as the BC Team member picked her spots with dynamite kills and sneaky roll shots.

The final two matches of the day were exciting as both went to a nail-biting three sets. The first of these saw the upstart #11 seed, Brentwood College, topple the #3 seed York House. In an example of height



*Serving for York House is setter Chloe Ng. Photo Ron Peters*



matters, the red clad Island team dominated the net punishing the York House Tigers with hit after hit. Brentwood's wall of #3 Jocelyn Lenarcic and setter Maxine Pollock made it tough on the Tigers to score. The first set was an emotional 25-20 win for Brentwood. Although Brentwood led for much of the second set, York House served their way back into it and found a way to win 25-23. York House's setter Chloe Ng was great as she ran the offense for the team, and led them like a captain should. However, in the third, Brentwood raced to an early 7-1 lead and held off the Tigers 15-11 for the huge upset. This created a three-way tie in the pool which made the placings determined by set records. Based on this the Tigers came first with a 60% record of 3 wins and 2 losses. Brentwood came second with a 50% record of 3 wins and 3 losses. The host MEI came third with a 40% record of 2 wins and 3 losses.



*Grade 12 hitter Emily Catton for Archbishop Carney. Photo Ron Peters*

match of the day saw the Langley Fundamental Titans earn another 3-set victory over the Mulgrave Titans to finish first in Pool D. The Langley girls beat Mulgrave 25-17, 26-28, and 15-11. Langley has flown under the radar all season as injuries took their toll, but now they are healthy and are a tough serving, tough hitting team. Elise Anderson sparked the East Valley team with several key blocks in the middle. Langley's Madison Magnowski's serves were bullets and she kept Mulgrave in disarray as they shanked many of their passes. Once again, the Ruse sisters led Mulgrave, but the strategy of serving deep to Fundy only paid early dividends as the adjustments made during a time out stopped Mulgrave's success. Langley Fundamental may be the Cinderella team of the tourney.