

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Big strides achieved for Crean Lutheran

By [TIM BURT](#)

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Crean Lutheran's football team continues to make great strides under coach Brett Mertens.

The Saints took another major step forward Friday night with a 28-10 victory over previously undefeated Calvary Murrieta to move into the semifinals for the first time against Saddleback Valley Christian at San Juan Hills.

This game figures to be even tougher than Friday's as Saddleback Valley Christian comes in with a 12-0 record and will be playing at home.

Mertens and his players hope the result is different from Week 2, when Saddleback Valley Christian won, 40-21.

"We'll see if we can play a little better defense this time around," Mertens said.

The coach is happy for his players.

"These boys deserve it," he said. "They've put in a lot of hard work. The program has been through a lot in seven years, so to be here in the semifinals ... God has been good to us."

Tough loss for TVT

Volleyball often turns into a game of momentum, and that's exactly what happened when Tarbut V'Torah met St. Monica Academy on Saturday night in the CIF 5A finals at Rio Hondo College.

It was looking good for the Lions after they won the first two sets. Then St. Monica caught fire and won the next three and the match to win its first CIF title.

TVT coach Lucas Black told his players he was proud of their effort.

"I told the girls they had nothing to be upset about," Black said. "They played hard and did the best they could."

The future also looks bright for the Lions.

"We graduate one player this year, Sydney Zee. She has been a standout for us all year, and we're definitely going to miss her," Black said. "We're looking forward to someone else stepping up and taking her spot next year."

Great fan support

Tarbut V'Torah's girls volleyball team had tremendous support from its fans at Saturday's match at Rio Hondo College. Many students who came up on a rooter bus were on hand to cheer the team.

The St. Monica team also had excellent support.

Basketball coming up

Local teams open the basketball season Monday.

The annual South Coast Classic girls basketball tournament hosted by University and Woodbridge starts up that day.

Mater Dei, Yorba Linda and Fountain Valley are in the first pool. University, San Clemente and El Doradi are in the second. Foothill, Woodbridge, Aliso Niguel and Capo Valley are in the third. Tesoro, Cerritos, Trabuco Hills and Los Alamitos make up the fourth.

On Monday, University will host San Clemente at 6 p.m. at Uni, and Woodbridge will meet Aliso Niguel at 7:30 at Woodbridge.

The championship is Dec. 5 at University.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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