

Mira Costa, Serra football teams get top seeds

The Daily Breeze

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Posted: 11/16/2009 03:25:50 AM PST

The Mira Costa football team has a chance for atonement in the first round.

Serra is positioned to exact its revenge in the final.

Mira Costa and Serra were the only South Bay teams to earn top-four seeds out of the area's 10 playoff-bound CIF Southern Section teams as playoff pairings were announced Sunday.

Mira Costa was awarded the No. 1 seed in the Western Division and has a chance to avenge last season's title-game loss to Quartz Hill, its first-round opponent.

"We're very excited about the No. 1 seed, and we're excited to play Quartz Hill," Mira Costa coach Don Morrow said.

Serra was seeded No. 2 in the Northwest Division opposite powerhouse Oaks Christian. It opens against Oak Park on Friday and needs just three more wins to set up the much-anticipated rematch with Oaks Christian, the team that eliminated the Cavaliers the previous two seasons.

Serra lost to Oaks Christian, 44-7, in the 2007 quarterfinals, then lost, 56-21, in last season's final. But Serra was tied, 14-14, after the first quarter last season and has been one of the few teams to give mighty Oaks Christian a challenge.

Mira Costa lost a hard-fought 14-0 game in last season's Western Division final at Quartz Hill, but this time Quartz Hill must come to Manhattan Beach. All first-round games are at 7:30 p.m.

Bay League champion Mira Costa (8-2) has won seven straight following a 1-2 start. Quartz Hill (6-4) finished in a three-way tie for second place in the Golden League and was an extra-point away from securing second place outright.

"We enjoyed playing against them," Morrow said. "They are well-coached and have a lot of great players who play hard. It should be a good game."

Morrow said he was pleased with how his program is progressing, particularly in the Bay League.

Wide receiver/defensive back Kyle Nunn has elevated his game, quarterback Kyle Demarco is entrenching himself as a trusted weapon and lineman J.R. Tavai has been a powerful player on both sides of the ball.

"In the last three or four weeks, I've been really happy how our game has rounded into form on all three levels," Morrow said. "We're doing well on the kicking game, we've had great defense and we're much better offensively."

Mira Costa is opposite Ocean League champion Culver City (9-1), which drew the No. 2 seed and hosts Dominguez (4-5) in the opening round.

Serra wrapped up its second straight 10-0 campaign to earn the No. 2 seed. The Cavaliers have

garnered national attention because of their high-powered offense that includes the nation's top receiving corps in Robert Woods, George Farmer and Paul Richardson and a strong-armed quarterback in Conner Preston.

Yet the defense has been equally impressive, allowing fewer than 10 points per game. This is why this might be Serra's best shot to eventually take down Oaks Christian, a six-time defending CIF champion that features Joe Montana's son at quarterback. Serra's journey starts against Oak Park (4-6), the Tri-Valley League's third-place team.

Three other local teams made the Western Division playoffs with Mira Costa.

Bay League runner-up Redondo (5-5) hosts Golden League runner-up Knight (6-4) on Friday. West Torrance (7-3), the Bay League's third-place team, opens at San Gabriel Valley League champion Warren (9-1).

Ocean League runner-up Inglewood (7-3) hosts Chaminade (6-4), an at-large team from the Mission League that snared the division's only at-large bid over Leuzinger, which lost its final three games.

Three other local teams join Serra in the Northwest playoffs.

Camino Real League runner-up Mary Star (5-5) travels to Del Rey League runner-up Cathedral (9-1).

Pioneer League runner-up El Segundo (6-4) has a long trip to Ojai to take on Tri-Valley League runner-up Nordhoff (8-2).

Lawndale (5-5) can celebrate its first playoff berth since the school reopened in a long haul of its own to take on fourth-seeded Pioneer Valley (9-1) of Santa Maria, the Los Padres League runner-up.

Two other local teams made the Northeast playoffs.

Prep League runner-up Chadwick (9-1) hosts San Joaquin League runner-up Bloomington Christian (6-4).

Animo (5-5) made the playoffs for a second straight season as the San Joaquin League's third-place team and opens at Santa Fe League champion Salesian (4-6).