

California Title to be Decided Saturday

Written by Pat Clifton
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The California Conference championship is essentially on the line Saturday in San Luis Obispo, Calif., as 5-0 Cal Poly hosts 5-0 St. Mary's. Both teams have one more conference game after Saturday, but scores against common opponents indicate either the Gaels or Mustangs will win the league this weekend.

St. Mary's has a point differential of almost double Cal Poly's in league play, and the Gaels have to work hard to keep the point differential down – make mass subs, walk to set pieces, play Penn State the night before a conference game.

And in Cal Poly's one match against truly elite competition this season, the Mustangs conceded triple digits to Cal, so the Gaels should be considered the favorites. But Cal Poly isn't afraid of the challenge.

"I think we're pretty confident in going to St. Mary's. Certainly they'll be a similar side to Cal in terms of size, but I think size is one thing. I think we can still handle them," said Cal Poly coach Dave Burnett.

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“They’re a good side that plays with a bit of width, but I think we’re more than happy to counteract that. We’re confident coming into it. We’re certainly not coming into it thinking it’s over before it starts. We’re still going to come into it thinking we can come out on top.”

St. Mary’s beat Cal Poly 57-12 in Moraga last year, and the Mustangs haven’t forgotten.

“We played St. Mary’s a few times in 7s, and coming off our loss last year, I think the boys are certainly out for a bit of payback,” said Burnett. “We haven’t lost too many guys, our retention’s been good. The boys are raring to go.”