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Women's Quarterfinal: Recap and Quotes

#3 STANFORD def. #6 PEPPERDINE, 4-1

ORLANDO, Fla. – For the second time in two quarterfinal matches, the higher-seeded team dropped the doubles point and stormed back with a singles sweep. This time it was Stanford that turned the tables to book a semifinal showdown with No. 2 North Carolina, who accomplished the same feat in the day's first match.

The Cardinal turned their 0-1 deficit into a 3-1 advantage in a lucrative two-minute stretch that saw quick-fire singles wins from No. 5 Janice Shin, No. 6 Emma Higuchi and No. 2 Melissa Lord. None of the three early winners dropped more than four games in their respective two-set victories.

With the defending champs leading at both No. 3 and No. 4, the semifinals were beckoning. But a wave of Pepperdine games put the match back into doubt. The tide threatened to turn, as Stanford No. 3 Caroline Lampl saw her second-set advantage turn into a deadlock at 4-all. On the next court over, Cardinal junior Emily Arbuthnott faced three break points as she served for the match at 5-4 in set two.

With the help of some first serves, Arbuthnott turned a 15-40 hole into match point at deuce. She sealed the victory for herself and her team on that sudden-death point, escaping further drama by dodging an incoming forehand that lasered towards the back fence on Court 4. It was the England native's 10th clinching match of the year, according to Stanford's athletic communications staff.

The No. 1 singles showdown ended with Pepperdine's Ashley Lahey leading Michaela Gordon, 6-4, 2-6, 2-0.

Pepperdine got on the board first by taking the doubles point with a match to spare. Jessica Failla and Anastasia Iamachkine were dominant in a 6-1 victory at the top spot, and Lahey and Daria Kuczar clinched the point with a 6-4 win at No. 2. The Cardinal have come back to win 20 of the last 25 matches in which they dropped the doubles point, according to the school.

QUOTES

Stanford junior Emily Arbuthnott

On her 10th clinch of the year:

“It’s actually a running joke now that I clinch all the matches. So I’ve been in that situation a lot, and it makes it easier in big moments like this. To be honest, I think it’s just that I never win really quickly. The most important thing is to stay focused. I had two other of my teammates on the court, and that took some pressure off. It was nice having everyone cheering on the sidelines and like I said, I’ve been there nine times before this year and many before that, so I feel pretty comfortable in that situation and confident I can pull off the win.”

On her team turning the 0-1 deficit into a 3-1 lead in a short period of time:

“I tried not to look too much, but I heard some good calls going around, so I was pretty confident we were up on a couple of courts. I think that really shows the depth of our singles. Obviously it’s not ideal to miss the doubles point, but to get back up to 3-1 quickly is really confidence-boosting.”

Stanford Head Coach Lele Forood

On her team’s repeated ability to recover from dropping the doubles points:

“It’s a different game, quite frankly. It’s a very different length of match. I think we have a lot of faith in each other in the singles.”

On the back-and-forth nature of college tennis:

“This is how it works, especially in these conditions. It’s a little challenging with the heat and stuff. You’re going to see more swings back and forth, I think.”

(Pepperdine quotes to come)