



Central Coast Tennis Classic
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Top Seed Taylor Townsend Advances to Semifinals; No. 2 Seed Katie Volynets Eliminated in EPIC Central Coast Tennis Classic

TEMPLETON, Calif. – Sept. 29, 2023 – Top-seed Taylor Townsend advanced to the semifinals of the **EPIC Central Coast Tennis Classic** at the Templeton Tennis Ranch while No. 2 seeded California native Katie Volynets was eliminated in a stadium court battle that extended over three hours.

Townsend defeated fellow American Ann Li, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2. While the first set did not fall in her favor, the tour veteran and world-ranked top 10 doubles player Townsend kept her cool perspective to dominate the second and third sets.

“I stuck to the game plan and stuck to what I was trying to do,” Townsend said. “I just executed a little bit better in the second and third.”

Reflecting on the match, Townsend said, “I honestly think that it was a couple of points here and there. I had a double break point in the first game, didn’t convert.”

Off court, the 27-year-old mother has taken time to enjoy what the Central Coast has to offer: “I’m going to go back to the coast today because it’s so relaxing. I look to the left and my feet are in the water and then look to the right and it’s mountains,” she said.

Another thing she’s enjoying is the local wine country, joking that “my main goal is to win the tournament so I can get a bottle of wine.”

In her chase for that bottle of wine, Townsend will face another American in her Saturday semi-final match. Wild-card McCartney Kessler, a Georgia native and former University Florida All-American, defeated qualifier Hanna Chang, 7-5, 6-2, to reach the semifinals on Saturday.

The second set started just as a gusty wind was moving into the area. Kessler later described the conditions as tricky saying, “It was pretty windy and I wasn’t playing my cleanest tennis ever, but I think I competed well, and I moved well. That was enough to get me through today.”

Kessler did not allow the conditions or her opponents repeated complaints about line calls distract her from the job she had to do.

In the bottom half of the draw, Mexico’s Renata Zarazúa defeated Walnut Creek’s No. 2 seed Volynets, 6-4 4-6, 6-0. After the long-fought first and second sets, Zarazúa pushed hard to find another level in the third. She moved Volynets across the court, dictating play from the baseline, without fear to come in and close on points.

Rounding out the second half of the draw, No. 4 seed, Iryna Shymanovich defeated American Makenna Jones for her semifinal berth, 6-3, 7-6 (8). The Belarusian has grown quite comfortable in California, having recently played tournaments in Stanford and San Diego, and building a training block at Pepperdine University into her fall schedule.

“I’m feeling good here,” she said. “I’m enjoying playing here. It’s a nice club, with nice people around.”

Singles semifinalist Kessler has already booked her spot in the doubles final with partner Alana Smith. The American pair, who entered with a wildcard, defeated Maria Kozyreva and Veronika Miroshinchenko, 1-6, 6-4, 7-10.

The all-American final will also feature Jessie Aney and Jaeda Daniel, who advanced past Lulu Sun and Volynets via retirement walkover. This is the first tournament the two are playing together, perhaps an unexpected partnership because they played for rival college teams, Aney having studied at UNC Chapel Hill while Daniel was at NC State.

- *By Anita Stahl*

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