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Chaparral, Sunnyslope to play for state title

By Jeff Hoodzow
For the Tribune

After Phoenix Greenway dominated all comers last year in 4A badminton, two new teams have emerged to battle for the crown as Scottsdale Chaparral and Phoenix Sunnyslope have advanced to Thursday's state title match at Glendale Independence High School. Chaparral upended Phoenix Shadow Mountain 5-0 and undefeated Sunnyslope (16-0) downed Tempe McClintock 5-1 Tuesday to secure their spots in the title match.

"They weren't going to lay down their rackets," Chaparral coach Carrie Davis said of Shadow Mountain. "But we had to keep our mind in gear."

Chaparral (16-1) has only one loss this year and it came to Sunnyslope by a score of 6-3 in September.

On the other side of the bracket, Sunnyslope sent McClintock home in the semifinals for the third straight year. The Chargers came out of the gates strong, with No. 1 Yumi Taguchi defeating Sunnyslope's Janet Barrita, 11-1, 11-9. However, McClintock was no match for the deeper, more experienced Vikings.

"I thought we would win a couple of more matches, I honestly did," McClintock coach Jen Bielack. "We won three against them last time and now we only won one."

One of the swing points of the match came in the second pairing. In the most exciting match of the night, Sunnyslope's Megan Hallick outlasted Paulina Skinner, 11-5, 8-11, 13-11, spelling the end for the Chargers.

"A lot of this game is mental and I don't think we were here mentally," Bielack said.

Bielack said anything could happen in the finals and if the match makes it to doubles, Chaparral could have a chance.

But Sunnyslope has been a dominant team all year.

"They return five people and this just might be their year," Bielack said.