

Boys' CIF Division Preview

The CIF Boys' singles and doubles divisions at the Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament always provides for fierce, high-level competition and is often a precursor to tomorrow's college and professional tennis scene in the U.S., given the high caliber of talent Southern California churns out every year. This week's draw at the 115th Ojai will be no different.

Harvard-Westlake (North Hollywood) senior Michael Genender, Newbury Park High senior Ryan Shen and Newport Harbor senior Reese Stalder headline a short list of contenders to win the prestigious Boys' CIF Singles division at The Ojai.

Orange County's top prep program, University High (Irvine), looks a favorite to return to The Ojai's championship platform in doubles through seniors Arash Hafezi and Konrad Kozlowski. Hafezi reached last year's CIF Boys' Doubles final at The Ojai in between collecting his 2013 and 2014 CIF-Southern Section Boys Individual doubles championships.

The Boys' CIF Singles and Doubles competitions, which begin Thursday and conclude Saturday with finals at Libbey Park, each sport a bracket of 64 entries.

The Stanford-bound Genender defeated Austin Rapp (now a freshman at UCLA) to win the 2014 CIF-Southern Section Individual tournament and avenge his three-set loss to Rapp in last year's Boys' CIF final at The Ojai – Genender's only high school defeat in 2014.

Shen, a Cal recruit, and Genender are the only competitors to have played in last year's CIF Boys' Singles semifinals at The Ojai.

Stalder reached the Round of 16 at The Ojai last year and came within a tiebreaker of ousting Genender in the 2014 CIF-Southern Section Boys Individual quarterfinals. The TCU-bound Stalder was ranked No. 1 among SCTA Southern California 18s in singles and doubles in January.

Joining Genender as contenders from Los Angeles County is Palos Verdes junior Brandon Holt, the son of past Ojai champion Tracy Austin who teamed on last year's CIF Boys' Doubles championship tandem at The Ojai and is now entrenched as Palos Verdes' top singles player.

San Marino senior Danny Gealer and Peninsula sophomore Connor Hance, another Palos Verdes product, hope to improve on their singles quarterfinal appearances at last year's Ojai.

From Ventura County, Westlake sophomore Brandon Lam will test his mettle in the big kids' draw after winning The Ojai's Boys' 16 Singles crown last year.

Down the road from The Ojai, Viewpoint senior Julian Gordy and junior Jonathan Star reached The Ojai's CIF Boys' Doubles quarterfinals in 2014.

From the Orange County ranks, junior Bjorn Hoffmann is an emerging player from Corona del Mar. Los Alamitos figures to have a contending singles player and doubles team this week.

Big-serving junior Riley Smith comes off quarterfinal appearances in The Ojai's CIF Boys' Singles and the CIF-Southern Section Individual draws in 2014. Smith is the son of USC men's head tennis coach Peter Smith. Senior Kyle McCann and junior Vatsal Bajpai blazed a trail to the quarterfinals at the CIF-SS Individuals and a Round of 16 berth in The Ojai's CIF Boys' Doubles tournament in 2014.

Torrey Pines sophomore Jacob Brumm and Coronado junior Billy Rowe may be San Diego County's best hopes at The Ojai for CIF Boys' Singles glory. Last year, Brumm reached The Ojai's quarterfinals while Rowe gained the Round of 16.