



**TERESA VELAZQUEZ-ORTEGA**  
HEAD COACH

As she is set to start her ninth season as the head coach, Teresa Velazquez-Ortega has a strong core of returning players and has brought in a new group of freshmen and a new assistant coaching staff. Joining Velazquez-Ortega this season will be Gay Castaneda for her second year, along with Krystal Lee, who will be starting her first season. Last year, the Falcons rebounded from a slow start and finished in fifth place in the South Coast Conference. In

six of the last nine seasons, the team has finished in second place in conference action and will be looking for their first conference championship since the 1997 year.

The team has just one returning player this year and will look to a group of freshmen to help them into the post-season. Velazquez-Ortega began her head coaching career with the Falcons by being named the South Coast Conference Coach of the Year in 2001 and has compiled an 82-58 (.586) record in her time with the team.

Prior to taking over as the head coach, Velazquez-Ortega spent six seasons as the assistant coach under Jeanine Prindle (four years) and Nancy Welliver (two years). Prindle retired from coaching, while Welliver has moved on to be the head coach at Cypress College. Velazquez-Ortega has been involved with the Cerritos College volleyball program since 1989 when she led the Falcons to a Final Four appearance in the state championships. She also led the nation in kills among community college volleyball players that season. Velazquez-Ortega was also selected to the Asics All-America Team as well as to the All-State Tournament Team in 1989 and 1990.

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Velazquez-Ortega has extensive international volleyball experience and brings her very intense and competitive spirit to the program. She received her dental degree from National University of Mexico and earned her Master's degree in Physical Education from Azusa Pacific University. Velazquez-Ortega is also a full-time classified employee in the HPER/Athletics Division.

Velazquez-Ortega and her husband Elias, who is also a part-time classified employee in the athletic department; have two children - Chris (17) and Isaac (9). ■



**KRYSTAL LEE**  
ASSISTANT COACH

The newest addition to the Cerritos College volleyball coaching staff is Krystal Lee, who was a product of the community college system. After attending Hacienda Heights Wilson High, Lee transferred to Downey High her senior year, and was a three-sport athlete. At one point, she was a league Most Valuable Player, as well as making several all-tournament teams. Lee was also a member of the water polo

and swimming teams and earned all-league recognition in water polo. After spending a year at Vanguard University, Lee transferred to Golden West College and played on their 2003 state championship team before finishing her playing career at San Diego State University.

Lee started her coaching career while she was still playing and has spent time serving as the Whittier Christian High boy's junior varsity coach (2004), La Jolla County Day High School girl's junior varsity coach (2005) and worked the SinJin Smith and Randy Stoklos Beach Volleyball Coach as the Director of the Oceanside Division from 2006-07. In 2008, Lee was the coach of the Impact Volleyball Club for girls 15 years old and under.

Lee is currently attending cal State Long Beach to earn her credential in Physical Education. She has an older brother (28) and her younger sister Ashley (18) is a sophomore on the Cal State Long Beach volleyball team. In her spare time, Lee likes to snowboard, play volleyball, go rock climbing, surfing, playing with her dogs and working with kids. ■



**GAY CASTANEDA**  
ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH

Joining the coaching staff for her second season is Gay Castaneda, who has 15 years of high school coaching history. From 2001-05, Castaneda coached the girl's volleyball teams at Santa Fe High, as well as the boy's team from 2002-06. With the girl's team, she led them to the CIF Playoffs from 2002-05 and reached the quarterfinals twice. In 2003, they captured the Del Rio League championship. On the boy's side, they won the league title in 2004

and reached the CIF quarterfinals. The qualified for the post-season from 2003-06.

Her coaching assignments have also included stints at Saddleback High (2000) as the varsity boy's volleyball assistant coach, Gahr High (1999) as the junior varsity girl's head coach, and at Whitney High, where she started her career and coached three sports. From 1993-99, Castaneda served as the girl's basketball head coach and led them to the CIF Playoffs in five of those seasons. She served as the softball coach from 1992-98 and guided them to the CIF Playoffs each season, while advancing to the CIF quarterfinals three times and won the Delphic League title in 1992. From 1991-98 she was the girl's head volleyball coach and guided them to the CIF Playoffs in seven of those years, while they reached the state playoffs in 1995. They advanced to the CIF semi-finals in 1998. She spent 1999 as the boy's volleyball head coach.

Castaneda was a three-sport athlete at Whitney High, earning all-league honors in volleyball for three seasons and also played basketball and softball. She then played one year of volleyball at Cypress College before moving on to Cal State Fullerton, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology, as well as a teaching credential. She then moved on to Cal Poly Pomona, where she earned an administrative credential.

Castaneda is also a math teacher at Santa Fe High and is working on her Master's degree in Physical Education. She is single and lives in Long Beach. ■



**STEVE LA RUSCH**  
ASSISTANT COACH

In his first year with the Cerritos College volleyball program, Steve LaRush has spent the last 19 years as the girl's junior varsity head volleyball coach and assistant varsity coach at Long Beach Poly High. A track and field athlete himself, LaRush was a high jumper who competed in volleyball in only his senior year at Glendale High and then received a track scholarship to Cal State Long Beach. But it was while he was at Glendale playing co-ed

volleyball that LaRush developed a serious interest in the sport. As a high jumper, LaRush posted a personal best jump of 7' 1" at Cal State Long Beach and went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Physical Education, while also competing internationally until 1986. LaRush eventually got involved in bobsledding and made the US National Bobsled Team in 1987-88, although he was not selected to the Olympic squad. LaRush went on to earn his Master's degree in Physical Education from Azusa Pacific University. ■