

New Orleans – Sunday, April 16, 2023 – Women’s Championship Match

4:30 pm – #1 Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes vs #3 Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson

NOTE: The notes below do not include events on the Tour Series unless specifically stated

Head to Head

- This is the first meeting between these teams
- Cheng and Humana-Paredes have played each other 16 times previously, and each has won 8 times... Cheng has won the last 2 meetings... they twice met in AVP semifinals (split those) but never an AVP finals... they did play in a FIVB gold medal match (in Xiamen 2018), with Humana-Paredes winning 21-19, 21-14
- Wilkerson holds an 8-5 advantage in the head-to-head against Cheng, but Cheng has won the last 3 meetings
- Humana-Paredes owns an 8-4 lead against Hughes all time... Hughes' only AVP win over Humana-Paredes was in Chicago 2019 in three sets
- Hughes is 6-2 all time against Wilkerson, including in the 2018 New York City championship match (winning 21-14, 21-19)... each of the last 2 meetings have gone to a third set, with Wilkerson winning in Chicago 2022 and Cheng winning in Doha in February

Title Tidbits

- Since seedings known (since start of 2001), this marks the 39th time that the women's top four seeds all advanced to the semifinals... it also happened in New Orleans 2016, when #4 defeated #1 in the title match
- From 2001 through 2014, there were 65 AVP championship matches pitting the tournament's top two seeds (an average of over 4 a year)... from 2015 through today (including Tour Series) New Orleans marks just the 6th time (in a 9-year span) that the women's title match has been #1 vs #2... the last 11 times that the finals have been between the top two teams the #1 seed has won
 - The others in that span: 2016 New York, 2019 Chicago, 2022 New Orleans, 2022 Waupaca (Tour Series), 2022 Hermosa Beach
- The #1 seed has won in New Orleans each of the other 3 times the AVP has held a women's event here (2015, 2016 and 2022)
- Since the start of the 2022 season, including the Tour Series, 12 different women's team won in the 16 events in that span... a win by Humana-Paredes / Wilkerson will make it 13 different teams in 17 events
- 16 of the last 23 AVP title matches (excluding Tour Series) have been sweeps... there were 16 consecutive AVP championship matches in which the team winning the first set won the match but that ended in Fort Lauderdale 2022

Cheng / Hughes are playing together for the 11th time on the AVP Tour and 36th time overall

- The duo has won twice on the AVP Tour (Chicago 2017 and Huntington Beach 2022 on the Tour Series)... they also have one 2nd place finish and three 3rds together
- The two began playing together in 2013 at the FIVB U-19 World Championships in Portugal, where they won a bronze medal... in 2014 they played in an AVP qualifier but did not advance, and won a bronze medal in the FIVB U-21 World Championships in Cyprus... in 2015 they formed a partnership at Southern Cal as sophomores... they competed together on the AVP through the end of the 2017 season before reuniting in Huntington Beach 2022 on the Tour Series
- Cheng has partnered with a Sara and a Sarah, while Hughes has partnered with a Kelly and a Kelley
- Cheng and Hughes became the youngest team to ever win an AVP title in Chicago 2017... Hughes was 22 1/2 years old while Cheng was two weeks shy of turning 22
- Entering the title match in New Orleans including qualifiers and Tour Series, the pair has a 46-15 match record... they are 42-4 when winning the first set and 4-11 when losing the first set... they are 10-7 in three-set matches
- In the last 2 matches leading up to the New Orleans championship match, the duo lost the first set by huge margins before coming back to win in three sets (lost 21-10 and 21-8)

All AVP Results

Tour	Date	Tournament	Seed	Finish	Points	Money
AVP	11/11-13/2022	Huntington Beach Open	1	1	1891	\$8,000.00
AVP	8/31-9/3/2017	Chicago Championships	12	1	1200	\$22,000.00
AVP	8/17-20/2017	Manhattan Beach Open	23	3	864	\$9,000.00
AVP	6/22-25/2017	Seattle Open	7	9	300	\$2,500.00
AVP	6/8-11/2017	New York City Open	13	7	444	\$4,400.00
AVP	6/23-26/2016	AVP San Francisco Open	13, Q1	2	640	\$10,000.00
AVP	6/16-19/2016	AVP New York City Open	14, Q5	3	540	\$7,000.00
AVP	8/13-16/2015	AVP Manhattan Beach Open	14	9	300	\$3,000.00
AVP	7/16-19/2015	AVP New York City Open	16, Q10	3	540	\$7,000.00
AVP	8/14-17/2014	Manhattan Beach Open	Q12	33	120	\$0.00

Kelly Cheng – age 27 – 6’2” – hometown Placentia, Calif. – currently Fullerton, Calif. – Southern Cal

- This is Cheng’s 36th AVP event with 5 different partners... she has been to the finals with 4 of them
- Cheng has won 2 times (Chicago 2017 and New Orleans 2022) plus won in Huntington Beach 2022 on the Tour Series... she has also placed 2nd 8 times, and placed 3rd 16 times... she has now advanced to the semifinals in 28 of her 35 AVP events entering New Orleans (80% of the tournaments)
- Internationally Cheng has won 7 gold medals, 3 silvers and 1 bronze
- Cheng has played in 10 different states on the AVP Tour (including Louisiana) and has advanced to the semifinals at least once in each of them, and the championship match in 6 different states (including Louisiana)... she won in New Orleans last year with Betsi Flint
- Cheng has played in at least 1 AVP championship match in each of the past 8 seasons (2016-2023)... the only partner she did not play in a title match with was Brandie Wilkerson (played one event, finished 7th)
- In New Orleans Cheng has 6 aces in her first match (2 sets), but then just 4 aces in her next 3 matches (8 sets)... she had blocks in her first 2 matches, then just 2 blocks in her last 2 matches

Sara Hughes – age 28 – 6’2” – hometown Costa Mesa, Calif. – currently Costa Mesa, Calif. – Southern Cal

- This is Hughes’ 36th AVP event with 8 different partners... she has 4 wins (plus one Tour Series win), 4 seconds and 12 thirds
- Hughes has now been in the semifinals in 22 of her 36 AVP events (61%) including New Orleans, and in the championship match 10 times (28%)
- She got her first 3 AVP wins consecutively (2017 season-ender, first two events of 2018) during a span in which she advanced to the semifinals in 8 straight AVP tournaments and 5 straight finals
- Hughes has 4 partners with whom she has only played one tournament with... the other 4 partners she has played at least 6 times, and has been to a championship match with each of them
- Hughes has 4 wins and all have come in some of the biggest U.S. cities, with 2 in Los Angeles (Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach), one in Chicago and one in New York City, then her Tour Series win came in the Los Angeles area as well (Huntington Beach)
- She has had at least 10 digs in each of her 4 matches here

Humana-Paredes / Wilkerson are playing together for the 3rd time on the AVP Tour and 4th time overall

- In their debut in Chicago 2022, the pair lost in the second round and had to win 4 straight must-win matches (including 2 three-setters) to reach the championship match
- In the 2023 season opener in Miami, the pair lost in the third round but then swept 3 three straight opponents to win the title
- This is their 3rd AVP tournament as partners and their 3rd time playing for the title
- Entering the title match in New Orleans the pair has a 14-3 match record... they are 11-0 when winning the first set and 3-3 when losing the first set... they are 4-1 in three-set matches
- The duo brings a 7-match winning streak into the finals, 6 of those by sweeps

- In New Orleans Humana-Paredes has 60 kills and 6 hitting errors, while Wilkerson has 58 kills and 8 hitting errors... they are 1 of just 2 teams here which have had more aces (14) than service errors (10) – the other is Aurora Davis / Lydia Smith who played just 5 sets and 6 aces and 5 service errors

All Results

Tour	Date	Tournament	Seed	Finish	Points	Money
FIVB	3/22-26/2023	Elite16 Tepic	9	5	760	\$8,000.00
AVP	3/16-19/2023	Pro Series Miami Open	1	1	2205	\$14,000.00
FIVB	2/1-5/2023	Doha Elite16	7	5	760	\$8,000.00
AVP	9/2-4/2022	Chicago Open	3	2	2205	\$22,000.00

Melissa Humana-Paredes – age 30 – 5'9" – hometown Toronto, Ontario – currently Hermosa Beach, Calif.

- This is Humana-Paredes' 13th AVP event with 2 different partners... she played her first 10 with Sarah Pavan, with 2 wins (Manhattan Beach 2019 and Honolulu 2019), 3 seconds and 2 thirds... won in the 2023 season opener with Brandie Wilkerson
- She has now advanced to the semifinals in 10 of her 13 AVP events and to the championship match 8 times including New Orleans
- She has played in 76 FIVB tournaments (7 golds, 7 silvers, 2 bronzes and 7 fourths)... all of her medals came with Sarah Pavan
- In each of her last 10 AVP events including New Orleans (up until the finals), she has averaged at least 6.5 digs per set
- Humana-Paredes has had at least 10 kills and 13 digs in each of her 4 matches here in New Orleans... in the tournament she has just 6 hitting errors in 109 attacks (the only other 2 players who have fewer are Carly Kan with 3 errors in 34 attacks and Lydia Smith with 5 errors in 44 attacks)

Brandie Wilkerson – age 30 – hometown Lausanne, Switzerland – currently Toronto, Ontario

- Wilkerson is playing in her 22nd AVP tournament with her 7th different partner
- Won her first AVP title last event in Miami... her other best career AVP finishes have been 2nd four times (2017 Manhattan Beach and 2018 New York with Nicole Branagh, 2020 Long Beach event #1 with Sara Hughes and 2022 Chicago with Melissa Humana-Paredes) and 3rd five times
- From 2019-2020 Wilkerson advanced to the semifinals in 4 straight AVP tournaments... then she played in 6 consecutive AVP events without reaching the semifinals... including New Orleans she has now advanced to the semifinals in each of her last 5 AVP outings
- In total she has now been in the semifinals of an AVP tournament 11 times in her 22 tournaments ... she has reached the semis with 4 different partners and the title match with 3 different ones
- Wilkerson has played 39 sets alongside Humana-Paredes entering the championship match in New Orleans, and has at least 1 block in in 32 of them (total of 57 blocks in those 39 sets)
- Wilkerson had 4 aces in her first 3 matches in New Orleans, then had 5 in the semifinal match