

Dakota Valley Opens Class A Title Defense With Sweep Of Pheasants

BY STEVE MILLER
Watertown Public Opinion

WATERTOWN — Dakota Valley took its first step toward repeating as the state Class A volleyball champion with a 3-0 victory over Redfield-Doland Thursday afternoon in the Civic Arena.

The fifth-seeded Panthers took down the fourth-seeded Pheasants 25-14, 25-19 and 25-11 in the opening round of the tournament.

Dakota Valley (23-3) will meet top-seeded Sioux Falls Christian in the semifinals tonight (Friday) at 6 p.m.

“That was a really good match to get the cobwebs out on and get some state-tournament experience,” Dakota Valley head coach Rick Pruett said. “We start three freshmen, so we are pretty young and we got them into the swing of things in a state tournament.”

Despite the seeding, the

Pheasants were prepared for a tough battle.

“Dakota Valley is the defending champion for a reason, they are a very good team,” Redfield-Doland head coach Joel Osborn said. “We knew going in we were the underdog and had talked about that as a team.”

The match opened with Elizabeth Lammers, one of the Panthers’ freshmen, slamming a pair of kills and notching an ace. Senior Emma Tuttle connected for three of her team-high five aces to help Dakota Valley build an 18-10 lead on the way to the opening-set victory.

“We stayed calm and eliminated unforced errors,” Pruett said. “We are very aggressive in our serving.”

The Panthers definitely created problems for Redfield-Doland.

“The biggest area we struggled with was our serve

receive,” Osborn said. “We couldn’t get the ball to our setter.”

The second set was closer with the teams trading the lead and finally being tied 15-15. From there, the Panthers went on a 10-4 run to seal the win.

Redfield-Doland again broke out in the third set, keeping it close early. After a 5-5 tie, Dakota Valley went on a 17-5 run to close out the match.

The Panthers finished with 29 kills, 18 assists, 30 digs, 13 aces and two blocks. Lammers tallied eight kills while her twin sister Meredith totaled six. Senior Lindsey Smith finished with 17 assists and nine digs.

Redfield-Doland tallied 16 kills, 15 assists, three aces, 31 digs and one block.

Senior Danielle Levtzow lead the team with five kills. Juniors Sarah Rozell and

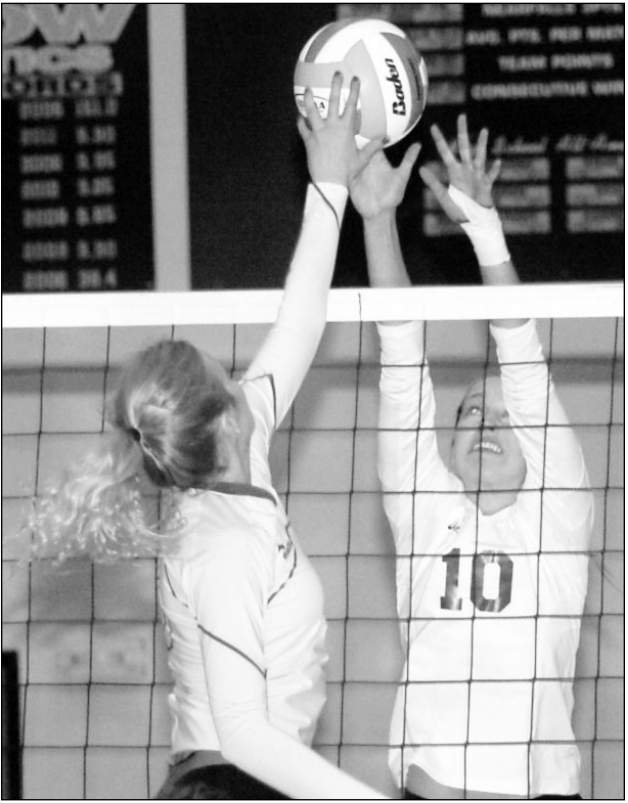
Jamie Tebben accounted for four kills each. Junior Allison Tschetter added 12 assists and senior Roni Levtzow eight digs.

The Pheasants (24-5) will meet fellow Northeast Conference foe Sisseton in the consolation semifinals at noon today (Friday).

Friday evening’s first match will be the third of the season between Dakota Valley and Sioux Falls Christian. The Chargers won the first two meetings this year.

Dakota Valley also was 0-2 in the regular season last year against Sioux Falls Christian before snapping the Chargers’ three-year reign as the state Class A champion with a semifinal victory in the state tournament.

“I hope it is like last year and the third time is the charm,” Pruett said. “It is going to be a battle of two really good teams.”



ROGER MERRIAM/WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION
Dakota Valley's Lindsey Smith (10) attempts to block Redfield-Doland's Marlee Mack during their opening round match in the South Dakota State Class A Volleyball Tournament on Thursday in Watertown. Dakota Valley won 3-0 to advance to a semifinal match with Sioux Falls Christian.

Knights Open With Win

AA: Defending Champs Sweep Pierre, Face Huron In Semis

BY BEN HEGGE
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The Sioux Falls O’Gorman Knights were unquestionably the favorites coming into this year’s Class AA State Volleyball Tournament.

They proved that in the opening round.

The defending champion Knights defeated Pierre 25-6, 25-12, 25-13 on Thursday in the first round at the Summit Center.

“We have not played Pierre yet this year, but we just wanted to focus on the task at hand,” said O’Gorman head coach Julie Kolbeck. “We treated it like a normal Thursday game, because we did not want to make it bigger than it actually was.”

The Knights got a huge performance from Creighton commit Taryn Kloth who totaled 18 kills in the three set match.

“Before the game, coach reminded us of what it felt like losing in the first round two years ago,” said Kloth. “We didn’t want that to happen again.”

The Knights got things rolling early jumping out to a 7-0 lead in the opening set. O’Gorman did not look back on their way to a 25-6 opening set victory.

“Our primary focus was to serve aggressively and rely on our blocking,” said Kolbeck.

The second went no differently for the Knights as they cruised to a 25-12 set victory.

In the match’s final set, O’Gorman led 13-5, but after a 6-0 run by Pierre, the Knight lead was cut down to two. After a timeout by coach Kolbeck, the Knights regrouped and to win the set 25-13 and advance to the semi-finals.

Kloth’s final statline included 18 kills, four digs, and



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
O’Gorman’s Taryn Kloth attacks the ball during the Knights’ opening round match with Pierre in the South Dakota State Class AA Volleyball Tournament on Thursday at the Summit Center in Yankton.

AA Notebook: Harrisburg Excited About First AA VB Tournament

FROM P&D STAFF REPORTS

For the first time since 2008 and as a ‘AA’ program, the Harrisburg Tigers have made it to a volleyball state tournament.

“This is very exciting,” Harrisburg head coach Ronette Costain said. “For how young we are for them to experience this is great. For them to see all of this and to soak it in for the future will pay off. It’s huge, I mean, they know now that they can play at this level. It’s an exciting time for us.”

On the roster for Harrisburg are 12 underclassmen, as the Tigers only graduate two seniors after this year.

“We are very young and we showed that tonight,” Costain said. “We just failed to execute against a very good team.”

In their first match in a state tournament in five years, the Harrisburg Tigers fell to the Watertown Arrows in three sets. However, Costain isn’t letting one loss ruin her teams trip to Yankton.

“This tournament is key to our success for the future,” she said. “We never quit and we tried to dig deep. That is what happens with young teams, but hopefully we can rebound and win our next game.”

A key growing pain with a young team and program, is facing teams who can attack well.

“We didn’t have an answer for their outside,” Costain said. “They went through the middle and attacked us. Credit them, they did an excellent job.”

Something she noticed right away was the speed of the ‘AA’ game compared to ‘A’.

“We needed to speed up our game,” Costain said. “It’s a lot faster than ‘A’ and we

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Arrows Cage Harrisburg In ‘AA’ Tourney Opener



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Harrisburg’s Haley Bruggeman dives to try to save a ball during the Tigers’ opening round matchup with Watertown in the South Dakota State Class AA Volleyball Tournament on Thursday at the Summit Center in Yankton.

BY NICK ROBINSON
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For the third time this season, the Watertown Arrows volleyball team defeated the Harrisburg Tigers. The Arrows defeated the Tigers in three sets by the scores of 25-15, 25-19, 25-20 on Thursday evening in the opening round of the AA state volleyball tournament at the Summit Activities Center in Yankton.

“This was such a big confidence booster for these girls,” Watertown head coach Kim Rohde said. “They’re a team you can’t take lightly. We’ve played them three times this season and they’re here

for a reason. We knew what they were capable of.”

To start the match, Watertown (20-4) came firing on all cylinders. Early off, they took a 4-1 lead, showing consistency on both aspects of the game.

“Big leads early are huge,” Rohde said. “It’s really nice to have a cushion if you run into a time, like we did, where there are errors here and there.”

However, Harrisburg (12-11) didn’t go down without a fight. The Tigers went on a 6-0 run and cut the Arrows’ deficit to 14-7. The attacking from Watertown proved to be too much in the first match, as they defeated Harrisburg 25-15.

“We had a good first set that really set the tempo for the rest of the game,” Rohde said. “They came out and gave us a fight, but our attacking proved to be enough at the end.”

Macy Denzer started hot for the Arrows in the second match, as she had four kills early, to give Watertown a 7-3 lead. Despite a late set serve, Watertown was able to hold onto a 25-19 victory in set two.

“They were a little slow getting to that third set,” Rohde said. “If we can continue the offense this way throughout the tournament, it would be a great asset for us.”

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USD WOMEN
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