

Elite Performance

Hard work leads to a career highlight

"We were all counting down. Everyone had the number on their finger while playing Waterloo West," Abby Brunssen 20 said about an accomplishment she sought hard for her last season on the team.

With confidence in her voice, Brunssen said, "I'm going to get 1000 kills."

That was Brunssen's motto, and at the Center Point-Urbana gym on Saturday, October 12, Brunssen and her teammates celebrated her goal as soon as it happened.

Brunssen said, "The entire team was hugging me in the huddle, and I just felt really special because the gym [spectators] kind of looked over like - what just happened?"

The infamous kill was not what Brunssen actually anticipated, but it was still a monumental moment for all.

"It wasn't even like a nice kill that I got it on," Brunssen said. "I think I wiffed the ball, honestly."

Brunssen's teammates were moved as one of their own reached the high honor.

Addison Phillips 23 saw the moment from a sideline view.

"We were sitting on the bench, and once she got it, the crowd stood up and held signs cheering for her. Abby puts a lot of effort into the team, so I was very happy and proud of her," Phillips said.

Brunssen's work ethic and passion for the game made her a stronger player than the rest. She played all year round.

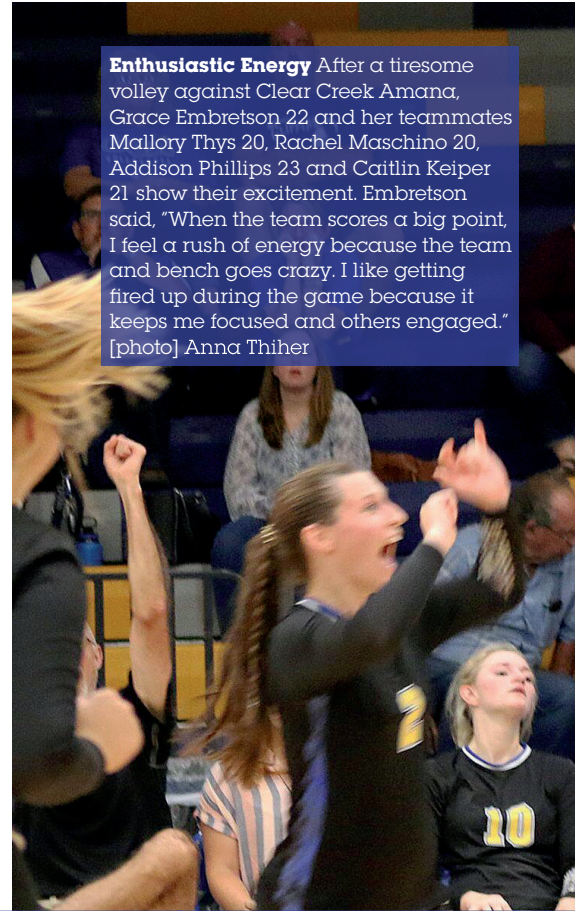
"I play for Iowa Rockets, and I practice three to four times a week. I think that sets me apart," Brunssen said. "My commitment to volleyball was more intense than any of the others. I've been playing volleyball since I was in second grade."

From a young age, Brunssen always focused on one specific achievement.

Brunssen said, "I knew when I was a freshman, my goal as a senior was to get 1000 kills."

-Jaden Thys

Enthusiastic Energy After a tiresome volley against Clear Creek Amana, Grace Embretson 22 and her teammates Mallory Thys 20, Rachel Maschino 20, Addison Phillips 23 and Caitlin Keiper 21 show their excitement. Embretson said, "When the team scores a big point, I feel a rush of energy because the team and bench goes crazy. I like getting fired up during the game because it keeps me focused and others engaged." [photo] Anna Thiher



What's your favorite drill?



"The bounce game. Every time the ball hits the ground, you get a point. It goes all the way up to 25, and you want to get the least amount of points."

-Janelle Morris 22



"I like hitting lines, [because] the hitters can work on placing it. We have more energy because the setter sets to a certain hitter."

-Emma Von Ahsen 23

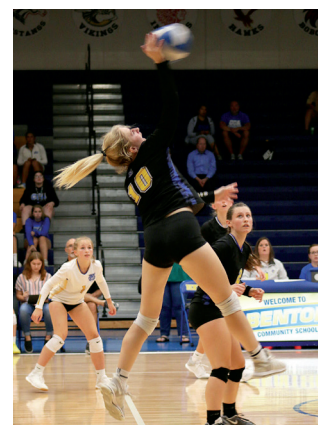


"I like the Five vs. Five Wave. It's a scrimmage, but we all get to work on our skills. We work on passing, setting, hitting and get better."

-Delaney Lohrer 23



Attentiveness When Sophia Carlson 21 goes in to play, she finds importance to stay alert. "I either play defense or serve," Carlson said. "I like back row because it keeps you on your toes." [photo] Alashia McMurdo



Reach High In hopes of a kill, Rachel Maschino 20 swings alongside Olivia Janss 23 and Mallory Thys 20. Maschino said, "When I hit, I focus on getting on top of the ball so it gets a nice spin." [photo] Anna Thiher

Sports Volleyball

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1. Eyes On the Prize To play her best, Chloe Meeks 20 finds importance in the team's pregame ritual. Meeks said, "The warm-up routine affects the game a lot because if you don't focus while warming up, you won't be focused in the game." [photo] Camryn Mosty

2. Serve's Up To keep the serve advantage, Sienna Kaestner 20 holds high expectations for herself. "My role on the team is to serve in hopes of an ace," Kaestner said. "It's usually pretty nerve-racking, and I try to focus on my toss." [photo] Camryn Mosty

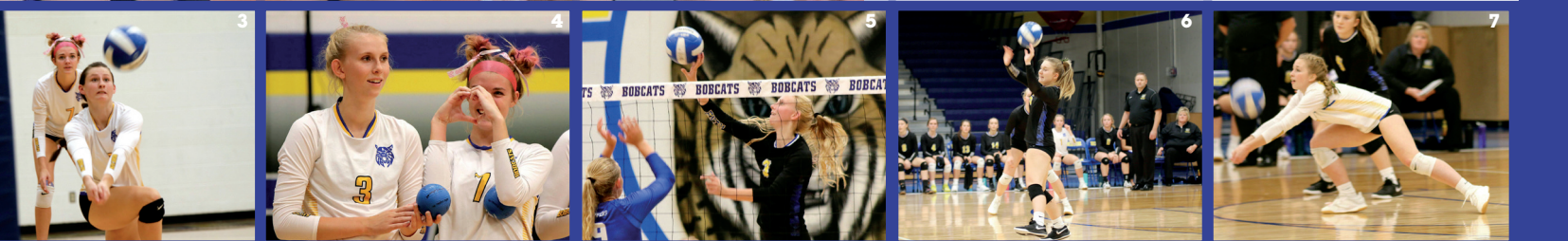
3. Laser Concentration Back row buddies Mallory Thys 20 and Kayla Lambe 20 make sure they are always aware of their teammates' placements to get the best pass possible. "I was focused on digging the ball, so I feel like I'm doing my part for the team when I get a dig," Thys said. [photo] Camryn Mosty

4. Show the Love As Abby Brunssen 20 and Kayla Lambe 20 await game time, Lambe reveals a spark of passion. Lambe said, "It was senior night, and I was getting ready to be announced. As I saw my friend Angie Gorkow [19] in the stands, I put up a heart." [photo] Camryn Mosty

5. A Soft Touch To keep Clear Creek Amana on its toes, Abby Brunssen 20 diverts her next play. "I was tipping [because] I saw it was open, but I usually prefer to hit. If I get blocked, then I switch it up to a tip," Brunssen said. [photo] Anna Thiher

6. Willpower When Sarah Gorkow 22 suits up for a varsity role, she gives her best effort. "I was very nervous, and I didn't want to mess up," Gorkow said. "It was a high hit, so I used my hands to set it up." [photo] Anna Thiher

7. A Different Mentality The blue and gold libero jersey works well for Olivia Janss 23 as she prepares for the tough roll on the team. Janss said, "Being the libero takes a mindset that can be challenging. I try to be chill with my emotions." [photo] Anna Thiher



Scoreboard

Vinton Shellsburg	3 - 0
Clear Creek Amana	2 - 3
South Tama	3 - 0
Williamsburg	3 - 1
Center Point-Urbana	0 - 3
Independence	1 - 3
Regionals	
Solon	3 - 1
Davenport Assumption	1 - 3



Dance The music blares as Caitlin Keiper 21, Olivia Janss 23, Grace Embretson 22, Chloe Meeks 20 and Kayla Lambe 20 prep. "We listen to music and jam. It's a way to let out our nerves and let loose," Keiper said. [photo] Makenna McManemy



Enjoy the Moment The sideline squad of Sophia Carlson 21, Caitlin Keiper 21 and Addison Phillips 23 finds new ways to supply energy. "When we get a point, the bench stands up and waves a shirt to show we are proud," Phillips said. "It became a tradition after the first game." [photo] Camryn Mosty