

game point WEST

AWAITING THE SERVE,

Gabi Delsing '17 prepares for a serve from Dubuque Wahlert on Sept. 13. The Women of Troy lost, 0-3.



PHOTO BY ALLY BAUER

END OF A SEASON,

Colby Greene '18 hugs Madi Ford '17 after losing to Ankeny Centennial in the fourth set at State on Nov. 8.

"A million things were running through my mind," Green said. "I'll never get to play with those seniors ever again, and it just sucks because they're my best friends."



PHOTO BY ALLY BAUER

POINT WEST!

Seniors Emma Norris, Emily Halverson and Maddie Fay celebrate a kill in the third set against Ankeny Centennial on Nov. 8. "The first set felt amazing," Norris said. "Our energy was there. Everyone was connecting, and we were playing our game."



PHOTO BY ALLY BAUER

UP TOP

Setter Aubrey Sowers '17 high-fives her teammates as they announce the starters for senior night against Waterloo West on Oct. 11.

READY FOR THE HIT,

Right side Cailyn Morgan '19 and middle Emily Halverson '17 jump to block the ball against Bettendorf on Oct. 31. "The chemistry of the team really helped us pull it together and come out with a win," Morgan said.

OUTCOMES

CR Prairie	3-1
Linn-Mar	0-3
City High	3-1
Dubuque Wahlert	0-3
CR Xavier	3-1
Waterloo East	3-0
Waterloo West	3-0
CR Jefferson	3-1
Muscatine*	3-0
Bettendorf*	3-2
Ankeny Centennial**	1-3

*Substate game **State game



PHOTO BY GINNY ORDMAN



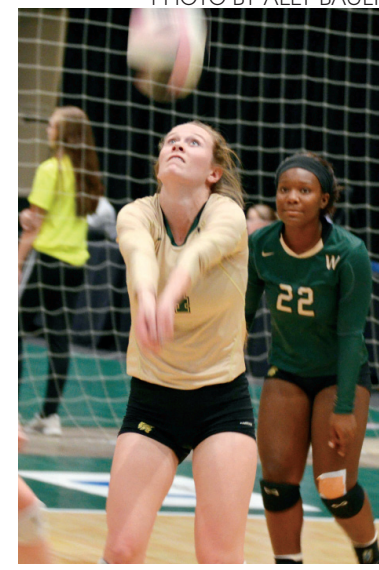
PHOTO BY ALLY BAUER



PHOTO BY ALLY BAUER

ASSISTING A TEAMMATE,

Setter Maddie Fay '17 prepares to set the ball against Ankeny Centennial on Nov. 8.



EYES ON THE BALL,

Libero Madi Ford '17 passes the ball in the third set against Ankeny Centennial on Nov. 8. "We gave it our all and put up a hard fight," Ford said. "It was a horrible feeling when the game was finally over."

PHOTO BY JULIA AUSTIN



DOWN LOW, Gabby Klemme '17 reaches to pass the ball against Waterloo West on Oct. 11. "Senior night was a lot of fun because it was an easier win, and all of us got to play together at home one last time," Klemme said.

After the third set of the regional final, after Bettendorf launched a comeback, West's coaches took the team back to the stairwell. The players' minds raced and nerves soared, but that meeting brought them back together. Bettendorf won the next set, but in the fifth, the ball flew over the net and hit out of bounds. Game point, West. "Things started to get a little shaky ... that's when we started to get a little tight and frustrated," Cailyn Morgan '19 said. "We knew we could do it ... and we didn't want to just play to win. We wanted to play for each other."

Co-captain and middle blocker Emily Halverson '17 said the team played with a lot of heart. "We got a little too comfortable ... but I never doubted that we could pull out the win," she said. "I think it just fueled us to work harder and push each other." The team's communication revealed their close bond. "Our ability to play as a team is what makes us really special," setter Aubrey Sowers '17 said. "We all accept our individual roles and bring out the best in each other."

According to some of the players, team chemistry and years of friendship have made the group unique. "We are a big group of girls who love to play volleyball and laugh," co-captain and right side Ali Tauchen '17 said. "We have so many inside jokes and truly care about each other and trust one another." But that doesn't stay in the gym. Coach Randy Dolson said he believes the girls carry that spirit to the classroom and the community. "They believe in each other—both on and off the court—and are committed to each other in reaching their goals," Dolson said. "They are strong young women."

At the start of the season, the girls were all excited to be back together. But Sowers discovered they had some work to do. "We were baffled that we were not destroying every team because of all the talent we have," she said. Injuries and sickness also took a toll. The team didn't practice with a full squad until late October, according to Dolson. "A lot of time [was spent] with different team members having the flu or other sickness, which made a run through most of the team, as well as coaches," he said. "But I believe it made us stronger mentally." The coaches decided that to succeed with only limited practice with a full squad, they'd have to focus on the details. "A big challenge was to eliminate our errors because most teams that beat us didn't truly beat us, we beat ourselves," middle Colby Greene '18 said.

Leadership, especially among the seniors, brought them together, outside hitter Emma Norris '17 said. "Having the seniors take leadership is a major part of success," she said, "because we pick each other up and keep a positive attitude." But being leaders has been bittersweet for the seniors, who have watched the team grow but also knew it would soon come to an end. "We started to become more focused because we started to realize we don't have that much time together," Maddie Fay '17 said with a smile. —By Brooke Goodman