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United as One

Volleyball team works together to reach goals

Voices bounced off the walls as a troop of girls ran down the hall, warming up for the battle ahead. They chanted “Everywhere We Go,” boosting spirits before facing the opponent. Minutes later, they were trying to keep the volleyball off the floor.

“We had fun being together as a team,” setter Laynie Whitehead ’15 said. “That gave us more confidence when playing together.”

That team chemistry was put to the test at the MVC/MAC Showdown on Aug. 29 at Cedar Rapids Kennedy.

“It was super hot in the gyms, but we shifted our focus on what we could control—which was getting kills and making saves,” setter and defensive specialist Leah Best ’14 said.

Their season rocketed after the team competed well in the Found Extravaganza, a Sept. 14 tournament hosted by West.

“The most exciting part of the season was getting second in our tournament,” Whitehead said. “That was the first time our team clicked.”

Then a behind-the-scenes struggle began to affect team dynamics. Whitehead struggled with tendonitis, Toni Martins ’14 suffered from a muscle strain and Madi Miller ’15 had her

appendix removed.

Despite those setbacks, the team kept winning matches, including the the Battle for the Spike against City High on Sept. 24.

“It was amazing to watch my teammates battle through the whole game and giving it their all,” Miller said.

That victory came down to the last of five sets, with long volleys and full rotations.

“Winning the spike felt great,” outside hitter Mollie Mason ’14 said. “There is a certain level of competitiveness in that game.”

With the first regional game Oct. 28, the team tried not to look past the next game.

“You have to focus on the task at hand before you get to the big picture,” middle player Ali Tauchen ’17 said. “Perform now, and worry about the results later.”

But the loss against Cedar Rapids Jefferson 2-3 in the first regionals game cut the season short. Despite an abrupt ending, Martins said the closeness of the team made this season her favorite.

“If one of us loses, we all lose. If one of us wins, we all win.”

—By Aileen Weeks

1. **MINE!** Ali Tauchen ’17 calls for the ball after a spike from Dubuque Hempstead on Oct. 1. “When we’re having fun and playing as a team, we tend to play better,” she said.

2. **READY AND WAITING,** Mollie Mason ’14 and Mikaela Morgan ’15 receive instructions on the next play during the Battle of the Spike on Sept. 24. “We focus on one game at a time but try to keep our intensity throughout the entire season,” Mason said.

3. **CELEBRATING A SPIKE!** juniors Laynie Whitehead and Mikaela Morgan high-five after a point scored against Cedar Rapids Jefferson on Sept. 10. “Having a positive attitude not only affects yourself but your teammates as well,” Morgan said.

4. **POINT WEST HIGH!** Madi Miller ’15 and Mollie Mason ’14 celebrate an ace scored against Waterloo East on Sept. 3. “We worked really well together, no matter what the circumstances were,” Miller said.

5. **FLYING HIGH,** juniors Laynie Whitehead and Mikaela Morgan block a spike at the Found Extravaganza on Sept. 14. “I have trouble staying positive with myself, but losing a few points isn’t the end of the world,” Whitehead said.

6. **A BIG LEAP** helps Toni Martins ’14 jump to spike the ball against Linn-Mar on Sept 24. “I can never be negative because then I will play poorly,” Martins said.



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OUTCOMES

MVC/MAC Showdown	1-2
Waterloo East	3-0
Marshalltown Invitational	2-2
CR Jefferson	3-1
Found Extravaganza	5-1
Dubuque Senior	3-0
Linn-Mar	3-0
DM Roosevelt Invitational	5-0
Dubuque Hempstead	1-3
Iowa City High	3-2
CR Jefferson Invitational	1-2
CR Kennedy	3-0
MVC Tournament	5-1
CR Prairie	3-1
Regionals/CR Jefferson	2-3

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