

# No. 1 teams in two classes face off for title

## Cowgirls walk away league champions

By Roxie Yonkey

*Goodland Daily News*  
Saturday's Northwest Kansas League Tournament had an air of inevitability about it. While pool play and the semifinals had to be played, everyone looked forward to the main event, Class 4A's No. 1 vs. Class 2A's No. 1 in the final.

No. 1 (2A) Atwood's main goal was to knock off No. 1 (4A) Goodland in the Northwest Kansas League final. Goodland was undefeated and Atwood's lone loss came at Goodland's hands in the previous week.

Atwood seemed about to reach its goal. The Buffaloes became the only team this season to hand Goodland a loss in two games and seemed to have their hands on the Cowgirls' throats in the second game when Goodland escaped. The Cowgirls went on to win 5-15, 15-12, 15-9.

Top-seeded Goodland reached the finals by defeating St. Francis 15-8, 15-1; Colby 15-5, 15-5; and Oakley 15-2, 15-9 in pool play; and Hoxie 15-3, 15-5 in the semifinals.

Goodland (34-0) opened scoring in the championship match when Goodland's Julia Darnauer stuffed Ginger Kastens.

But not much went right for the

Cowgirls after that. Atwood (23-2) jumped up 6-2 before Goodland cut the margin back to one, 6-5, on kills from Jara McKee and Jill Sowers. But Sowers hit long and Atwood scored the next nine points, including three Katy Tompkins aces and five Cowgirl errors, to end the game.

Goodland returned the favor in the second game, scoring the first seven points.

Darnauer and Sowers picked up a pair of kills apiece in the run and Hallagin got an ace.

Then Atwood came back to tie the game at 11 on back-to-back Cowgirl passing errors.

Goodland Coach Jerry McKee called time out, but Atwood took the lead on Emily Braxmeyer's ace. Atwood thought they had Goodland on the ropes and they were ready for the knock-out.

"We had them 12-11 in the second game and they got away," Atwood Coach Gina Chvatal said.

Tompkins was called for a carry to break Atwood's serve. After an exchange of serves, Darnauer opened her serve with an ace that ate Braxmeyer.

Then Braxmeyer hit the net, resulting in a four-hit call on Atwood. Goodland was up again 13-12.

Braxmeyer broke Goodland's serve with a kill off Darnauer, but Goodland's Alisha McKee retrieved the serve with a kill off Tompkins.

Sowers served. Alisha McKee tipped in two kills.

Tompkins dug up the second tip, but she sent it backwards. All the Buffs raced after the ball, but couldn't get there.

Maybe that effort wore out Atwood. They fought hard through the third game's first third, taking a 4-3 lead, but two long volleys went the Cowgirls' way to give them a permanent lead.

Goodland reached 14-7 on Kendra Brack's kill before Atwood showed more life. The Buffs scored on a Cowgirl error and Erin Schmidt's ace before Brack popped a hit way over the net that fell about two feet inside Atwood's court.

Ashley Hallagin served and Darnauer killed Hallagin's set to end the match.

"We need to go out and get it done quicker and not have to pull back from the edge," McKee said, "but they (the Cowgirls) are pretty experienced and they know what to do."

Goodland's bench played a big role in the Cowgirls' victory. Atwood isn't deep, so the same girls played all day.



Adriel Alstrom (27) puts down a kill over Oakley's Jennifer Hake (22) during the Northwest Kansas League Tournament. The Cowgirls won the match 15-2 and 15-9.

Photo by Roxie Yonkey/The Goodland Daily News

Goodland was able to rest its players, giving the Cowgirl starters fresh legs when it really counted. Adriel Alstrom gave Goodland a significant lift in the Atwood match.

# Goodland sweeps through pool play

By Roxie Yonkey

*The Goodland Daily News*

The Goodland Cowgirls opened pool play in the Northwest Kansas League Tournament against eighth-seeded St. Francis, and the girls jumped off to a 6-0 lead before Sainty came back late in the first game.

With Amber Feikert serving, Abby Burr picked up a pair of kills for the Indians.

Jara McKee stopped the serve when her roll spike fell in a Sainty coverage hole, then she knocked a kill off Sainty's Heather Culwell to make it 13-6.

But three straight Goodland errors got Sainty to 13-8 before Alisha McKee smacked Hallagin's set off diving Amy Rice.

After an exchange of serves, Alisha McKee served. Darnauer killed Hallagin's quick set, then blocked Culwell to end the game.

St. Francis had spent much of the first game face down on the floor, trying to dig up Goodland attacks, and the constant diving wore on them.

Sainty scored the second game's first point, Feikert's kill of Kiedra Riedel's set, then it was all Goodland.

Goodland's Evann Hardy served from 9-1 to 13-1, then gave way to Janae McKee. McKee served out the match, including an ace on the 15th point.

Fireworks usually pop in the Goodland-Colby match, but this one was very lackluster. Colby seemed to be going through the motions. Goodland took a 7-1 lead in the first game, allowed two Colby points, then scored the next six. Hallagin had a pair of aces, Darnauer killed Lindsay McClure's overpass and Jara McKee hit Sowers' set into Colby's left front in the run.

Colby picked up a couple points, one on a phantom Goodland touch and the other on a Goodland error, before Sowers dropped in a change-up to get the serve for Darnauer. Sowers then killed Hallagin's set to end the game.

Goodland started the second game up 11-1 before Colby scored five straight. When Colby's Megan Blatt whiffed at a set, Brack got the serve. She opened with an ace, followed by a Colby error, then two Darnauer kills to end the match.

Goodland faced Oakley after Oakley had lost to St. Francis in a long three-game set, and the Lady Plainsmen showed that match's effects. Goodland opened 9-0, dropped a point, scored two more, and dropped another before finishing the match.

Alstrom had a stuff and a kill in the final run, then Darnauer stuffed Oakley's Carrie Wasse Miller to end the game.

Oakley didn't bow so easily in the second game. They tied up the match at 7-7 before Wasse Miller hit long twice to give Goodland the lead for good.

Several Oakley errors and two Jara McKee kills got Goodland to 12-7, but three straight Goodland errors made it 12-9.

Oakley's Kylie Siruta served long to give Goodland the serve. Jara McKee served an ace, then Alstrom and Alisha McKee killed Hallagin's sets to end the match.

SEMIFINAL

After waiting a long time for the pools to finish, Goodland faced Hoxie in the semifinal. Again, the first game wasn't much of a contest.

Goodland dominated, taking a 10-0 lead.

Hoxie later scored three points, all on Goodland errors, then Goodland finished the game on two Jara McKee kills, a Darnauer ace and a Hoxie error.

Hoxie did a little better in the second game, taking a 4-2 lead, then Goodland took control.



With Sowers serving, Hoxie erred, then Hallagin killed an overpass to tie the game.

After a serve exchange, Jara McKee served. Hoxie committed four straight errors, Alisha McKee killed an overpass and Hoxie made another mistake to make it 10-4.

Two Goodland errors gave Hoxie another point, but that was the Indians' last gasp.

With Hardy serving, Hoxie erred, then dropped in a hit just inside the Goodland back line.

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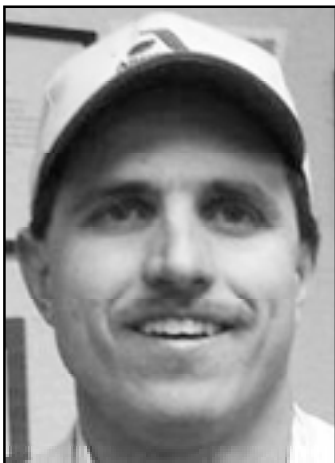
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