

Team reverses All-Star fortune

Ashley Hallagin named as Most Inspirational Player

By Roxie Yonkey
Goodland Daily News

For four straight years — every year of the Northwest Kansas All-Star Volleyball Match's existence — Black-shirts had defeated Whiteshirts.

When the match opened Saturday at Max Jones Fieldhouse, it seemed that Black's dominance would continue.

Black took the first game 15-7 and led 6-2 in the second before White rallied and won the match four games to one, 7-15, 15-12, 16-14, 15-6, 16-14.

Also for the first time, the Most Inspirational Player Award voting ended in a tie between a Blackshirt and a Whiteshirt, Black's Ashley Hallagin of Goodland and White's Katie Rupp of Colby.

Both professed surprise. "I was surprised," Hallagin said, "but it was a nice surprise. I had a lot of fun with my teammates."

Rupp said she didn't expect to win it, "but I had a positive attitude and I enjoyed my teammates."

In the first game, Black opened a 7-0 lead, mostly on kills and aces from Hallagin and Andrea Kasper of Scott City.

Black got back to 10-7 before Hallagin's tip broke their serve.

Goodland's Kendra Brack served out the game for Black, opening her serve with two aces wrapped around Hallagin's kill.

A White error and Triplains, Ashley Latham's kill ended the game.

White opened the second game with two aces by Kristin Unruh from Sharon Springs.

Then Black reeled off the next six points, including three aces from Andrea Bailey of Decatur County.

White then tied the match at 11 on three Black errors, a stuff from Atwood's Katy Tompkins and a kill from Wheatland's Shelly Moorhous.

Scott City's Megan Richmeier broke the tie for Black with an ace, but an error then gave back the serve to White.

Unruh served White to game point on three straight Black errors. White lost the serve when Moorhous hit into the net, but Bailey served long.

Wheatland's Cassie Zelfer served an ace to end the game.

Whiteshirt coach Jerry McKee of Goodland said the second game was the match's turning point.

White was down a middle hitter with the loss to injury of Sharon Springs' Jandi Bolen and they seemed to be the weaker team. But winning the All-Star Match is a matter of pulling strangers together as a team — and who can pass the best.

"We talked about getting the (losing) string turned around," McKee said. "We got a lot of confidence in that second game."

White seemed to feel more comfortable with each other and the choice of Zelfer as White's primary passer seemed to energize the team.

"She (Zelfer) was a real fireball," McKee said.

White displayed the ability to dig its way out of a big hole.

In the third game, Black led 6-0 on Kasper's stuff of Tompkins, three consecutive Hallagin aces and two kills by Shannon Baalman from Grinnell. Black kept its lead all the way to 12-11, but then Baalman's double hit tied the match.

Kills from Latham and Hallagin got Black to game point, but Kasper hit long.

Tompkins killed Atwood teammate Erin Schmidt's set off Brack, then Rupp dropped in a tip. Baalman hit into the net to make it 15-14, White. Four servers later, Rupp killed Latham's overpass to give White a come-from-behind win.

White then completely dominated the fourth game, taking a 13-3 lead. Black battled back late with Triplains' Lindsay Barrett serving. Brack got a kill on an over set, then three White errors made it 13-6.

But Black erred and Colby's Lindsey McClure served for White. Black's error and McClure's ace made it 15-6. The win locked up White's victory, but the match rules state that all five games must be played to ensure maximum playing time.

White kept right on rolling in the final game, taking a 3-0 lead.

But Black fought back with Baalman serving. Hallagin killed Brack's set, then Baalman picked up an

ace. Two White players ran into each other to make it 4-3. Later Latham served an ace, Hallagin stuffed Rupp and Kasper killed Rupp's back-row attack to take a 7-3 Black lead.

Then Atwood's Kristina Cooper tipped Brack's hit into a Black coverage hole and Schmidt served. Tompkins stuffed Kasper twice to make it 7-5 before St. Francis, Kiedra Riedel got a kill for Black.

But Hallagin served long. White tied the game on a Black error and Rupp's kill, then took the lead on two Black errors.

Black tied the game on two Baalman aces, then took the lead on Hallagin's dump and a White error. Then Brack served out.

Atwood's Emily Braxmeyer served for White.

Wheatland's Denise Manhart dropped in a free ball and Cooper put a kill into Black's center back. A Black error made it 12-11, White.

Zelfer's free ball went long and Latham served. Two White errors and Hallagin's kill made it 14-11 Black.

Then Zelfer dropped a tip into Black's center front.

Moorhous killed Schmidt's set to reach 14-13.

After an exchange of servers, McClure served.

Sharon Springs' Lisa Robben killed a Black overpass, then Baalman's tip went out, making it 14-14.

Manhart's up went into the net to



Goodland's Ashley Hallagin (8) and Scott City's Megan Richmeier (4) get ready to dig up a ball for the Blackshirts. Evann Hardy of Goodland backs them up. Hallagin was later named co-winner of the Most Inspirational Player award, along with Colby's Katie Rupp, a Whiteshirt.

Photo by Roxie Yonkey/The Goodland Daily News

lose White's serve, but Black couldn't hold it.

Moorhous served and Riedel's up went out to end the match.

"We couldn't get Katy (Tompkins) to move very well," Black coach Rose Packard said. "We hit right into her and we hit right into a lot of their other blockers."

Player wins Gold Glove

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Right fielder Jermaine Dye on Monday became the first Kansas City outfielder in 20 years to win a Gold Glove.

"I know I can't get too high on myself," said Dye, who was also voted to start in the All-Star team. "I've still got to go out there and work and make myself better because I know I can get better at this game and become a real impact player in this league."

Dye, 26, becomes the eighth player in Royals history and the first since catcher Bob Boone and pitcher Bret Saberhagen in 1989 to win the award. In 1999, Dye set a team record and

tied for the AL lead with 17 outfield assists. In 2000, he led the Royals with 11 outfield assists while setting career highs in batting (.321), hits (193) and home runs (33).

No Kansas City outfielder had won a Gold Glove since Willie Wilson in 1980.

"I still think I can get better in every aspect of my game," Dye said.

"You're always learning day in and day out what you need to work on and things you need to make yourself a better player."

"I still have a lot to work on, in every aspect of my game. That's something I plan to do for the rest of my career."

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