

Passion sends player to California

By Kathryn Gurfinkel

The Goodland Star News
A love for the game is what drove Alisha McKee, 18, to earn a letter in volleyball for all four years of high school and a chance to play at collegiate level in California.

McKee, a Goodland native and a May graduate of Goodland High School, said she has always had a passion for the game, but to win a letter, she had to excel at the sport.

"I've been playing volleyball since I could walk," she said.

She started playing in school when she was in sixth grade. In high school, her father Jerry, the varsity volleyball coach, trained her.

"I think he expects more out of me because I'm his daughter," she said.

Both of McKee's sisters, Angie, 34, and Aimee, 33, played volleyball in high school and college. She said watching her sisters go through college volleyball made her want to follow in their footsteps.

"I am a very competitive person," she said.

Last season, McKee led the Cowgirls to their first win in the state championship since Angie's team won in 1989.

"Since I was a little girl, it was always a dream of mine to win state," she said.

She played for a private team in Colorado Springs throughout the school year and for three weeks in the summer.

"We went all over the U.S.," she said.

She is on the "Olympic pipeline," she said, which puts her on a list to be considered for the American team after she finishes college.

Her talent has not only won McKee a championship and four years worth of letters, but a full ride scholarship to the California State University, Fresno commonly referred to as Fresno State. She said she had in-state offers, but she wanted to go to college somewhere outside of Kansas.

"It's so different out there," she said. "It's gonna be exciting."

McKee said one of the perks of playing college volleyball is the travel. The university team will play up and down the West Coast and visit both Hawaii and Alaska. She said she is excited about spending an extra day in Hawaii.

Although she doesn't know any of the other incoming freshman players, she said the team has a good record.

"I'm really excited to play for them," she said.

She is still not sure what degree she will pursue, but she graduated from high school with honors and she can always look to her mother Linda, a teacher, for help. The college will help, she said, if she has trouble keeping up due to constant travel.

"We have trainers at our sides 24 hours to help us if we have problems," she said. "The tutors will

Five freshman join Bulldogs

Alisha McKee is one of five freshmen on the Fresno State volleyball roster this coming season. McKee one of two who were listed in Prep Volleyball's top 250 high school players in the nation last season.

The Lady Bulldogs were 21-7 overall and 10-3 in the Western Athletic Conference last season, when Fresno State set school records for average attendance at home volleyball matches at 1,031

and for single-game attendance at 4,708.

The Bulldogs are coached by Lindy Vivas, who is entering her 14th season at Fresno State and earned her 300th career win last season.

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said, her coaches at the college want her to put on some pounds by the fall.

Along with volleyball, McKee played basketball as a freshman and she threw the shot in track.

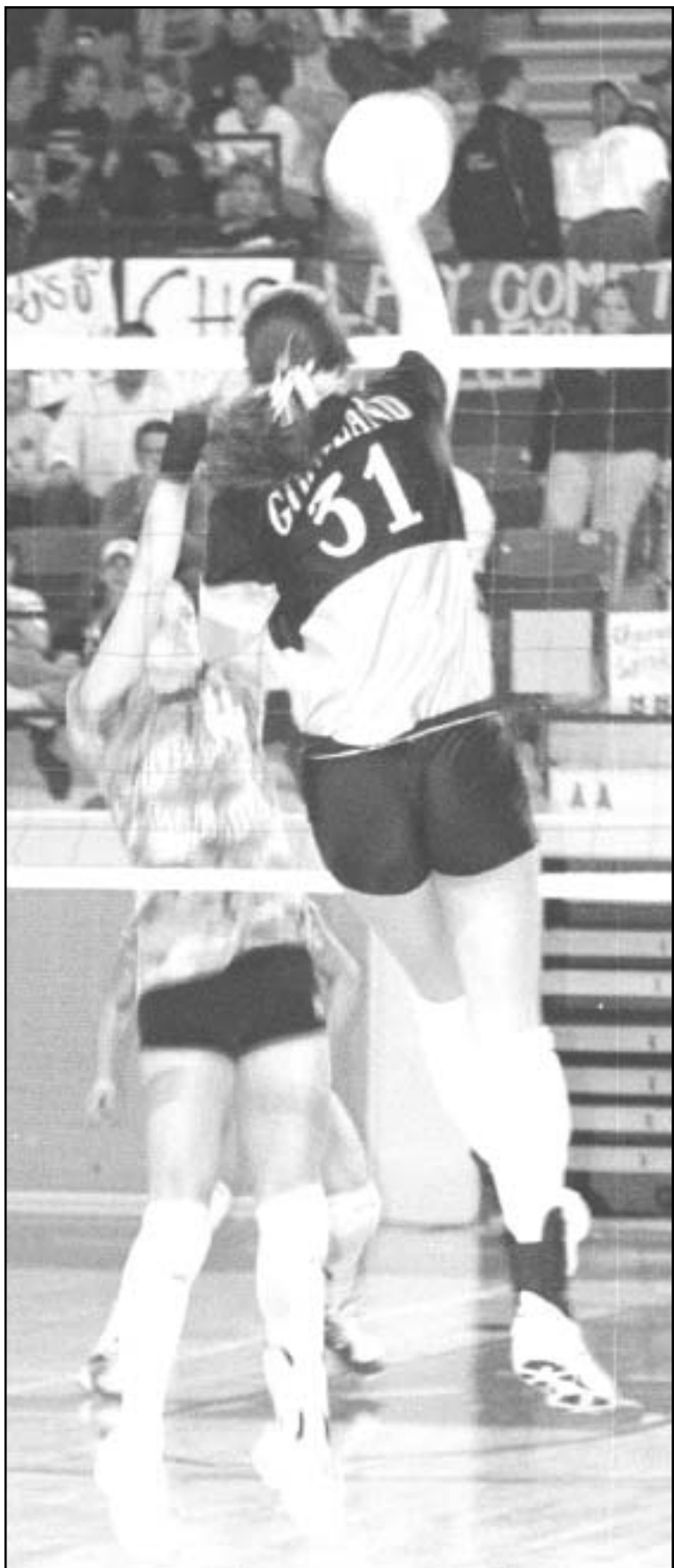
When she isn't working out or playing volleyball, McKee said, she likes to go to the movies or hang out with her friends.

"I like to have fun," she said.

McKee leaves for college on July 19 and she will start training for the team right way. Her parents plan to drive out to help her settle, and she expects them to come back for a visit or maybe even join her when she plays in Hawaii.

Alisha McKee (No. 31) scored a kill against Abilene High School during pool play at the 2003 Class 4A state volleyball championship tournament.

Photo by Liz West
The Goodland Star-News



Lady Outlaws outslug Oakley for win

Goodland's Lady Outlaws were supposed to play Oakley four times last week, but the weather forced the cancellation of Wednesday's doubleheader and of the second game of Friday's.

The one game played was an offensive slugfest with Goodland coming out on top, winning 24-15. Goodland got two runs on four hits in the top of the first inning to take an early lead. The girls held Oakley scoreless in the bottom of the inning.

Both teams scored five runs in the second to make the score 7-5 going into the third. The Outlaws added two more runs in top of the the third,

highlighted by a pair of doubles by Danielle Pettibone and Shawnie Butts.

Oakley was scoreless again in the bottom of the third. Goodland faced just four batters, with pitcher Holly Kibel getting strikeouts for the second and third outs.

In the top of the fourth inning, Andrea Wolak led off for the Outlaws with a solo home run. Goodland batters hit a triple and two doubles in the inning as the Outlaws scored five more runs to push their lead to 14-5. Oakley picked up a pair of runs in the bottom of the inning.

Goodland scored two in the top of

the fifth, to which Oakley responded with four runs with their turn at bat to make the score 16-11. The Outlaws picked up five more runs on five hits in the top of the sixth to take a 10-run lead, then Oakley cut that lead to six in dramatic fashion when, after three straight walks, the fourth batter hit a grand slam.

Leading 21-15 going into the seventh inning, Goodland scored three more runs in the top of the inning, then held Oakley scoreless. Again Kibel faced four batters striking out two.

Sammie Raymer and Kibel both had four hits and scored four runs in the game. Wolak hit a double to



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