

# Cowgirls win league volleyball tourney

**By Greg Stover**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
The Goodland High School volleyball team will enter the Class 4A substate tournament next Saturday with something they haven't had since Sept. 11 — a winning record. The Cowgirls won the Northwest Kansas League tournament Saturday in Oberlin, taking four of their five matches and improving to 18-16 for the season. It was a long, tough path to the championship as four of their matches went to three games.

Goodland started with a 2-0 win over Colby to start play in Pool B, in the junior high gym, then suffered their only loss 2-1 to Rawlins County High School of Atwood. The Cowgirls then beat a stubborn St. Francis team 2-1 to finish second in pool play.

With no time to rest Goodland took on Oakley, the winner of Pool A, in the tournament's first semi-final match beating the Lady Plainsmen 2-1. The Cowgirls then faced a rematch with Rawlins County for the title. The Lady Buffaloes beat Decatur Community High of Oberlin 2-0 in the other semi-final.

In the title match Goodland won the first game and Rawlins County the second then with the score tied at 23 in the third, the Cowgirls took the next two points for the game, match and championship.

In pool play, the Cowgirls began with a 2-0 win over the Lady Eagles of Colby, taking both games 25-16. In the first game, with the score tied at 3, Goodland scored seven straight points behind the serving skills of junior Melissa Swager to take a 7-point lead. The Eagles could get no closer than six points after that, losing 25-16.

Colby was a bit tougher early on in the second game, but with the score tied at 5, the Cowgirls got eight straight points, with at least four of them coming off the power of sophomore Dani Bedore's jump serve. After that, Goodland kept the lead. With the score 20-16, the Cowgirls scored five straight to earn the win.

In the first game of Goodland's second match, against Rawlins County, the teams played to a 10-all tie before the Cowgirls took charge



and won 25-18.

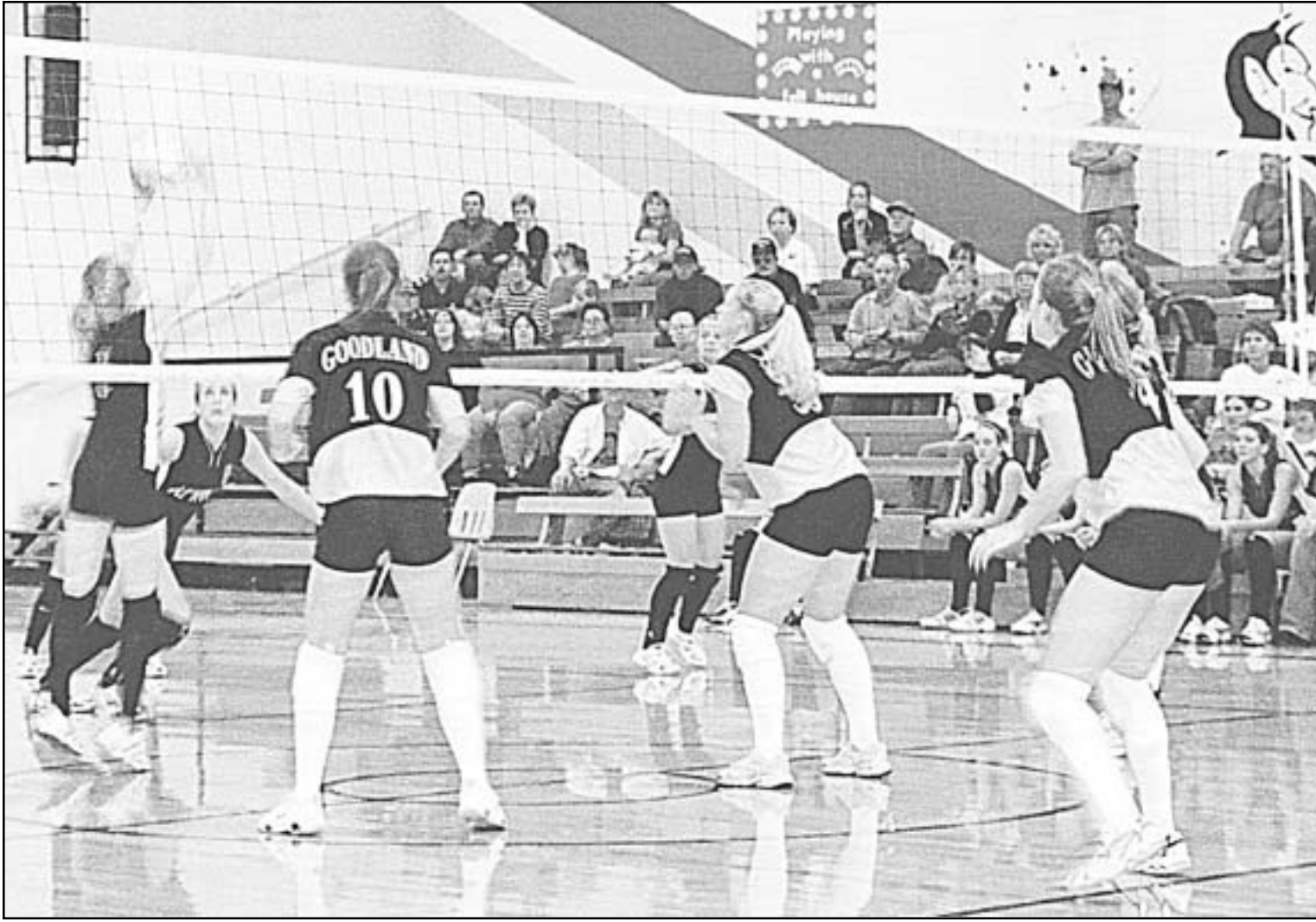
In the second game, the teams battled to a 19-all tie, then it was the Buffaloes' turn to take charge, winning six of the next seven points for a 25-20 victory. The Cowgirls took a 6-2 lead early in the third game, but Rawlins County fought back to tie at 15. Later, with the score tied at 17, the Buffaloes scored three straight then held off Goodland to win 25-22.

In the first game of the final match in pool play, the Lady Indians of St. Francis surprised Goodland by winning their only game of the tournament 25-23. The teams played even through the early part of game two, however the Cowgirls took the lead at 6-5 and widened it until winning 25-17.

In the third game, Goodland jumped out to a 5-0 lead behind the serve of sophomore Emily Murray, but the Indians came back to tie the game at 14 and again at 15. The Cowgirls then scored 10 of the next 14 points to win 24-19.

The good news was, with the win, Goodland advanced to the championship bracket. The bad news was the Cowgirls had to play again right away against the winner of the other pool, Oakley.

Perhaps playing so soon after a



Cowgirls Emily Murray (No. 10 in above photo), Melissa Swager (center) and Jordan Frazier got set to dig a spike from the Lady Buffaloes of Rawlins County during the first game of the championship match Saturday in Oberlin. Frazier (far left photo) served

tough three-game match wasn't so bad, though, as the Cowgirls sped out to a 10-4 lead in the first game, thanks to the attacking strength of Bedore and sophomore Whitney Archer. After closing to within two at 12-10, the Lady Plainsmen could not keep up. With the score 20-14, the Cowgirls took the next five points, three of them by junior Justeen Koehler with a pair of kills and a block. Junior Jordan Frazier got the winning point off her serve for a 25-14 victory.

Next it was Oakley's turn to take an early lead and not let Goodland catch up, as the Plainsmen won the second game 25-18. However fortune switched back to Goodland in

the third game, as the Cowgirls jumped out to a 7-1 lead behind the serve of Swager then held off Oakley to win 25-20 and earn a spot in the championship match.

In the other semifinal, Rawlins County defeated Decatur Community High School of Oberlin 25-20, 25-16 to set up the second match of the day between the Atwood and Goodland.

In the first game, the teams played even early on, battling to a 6-all tie. Rawlins County then took the lead, increasing it up to five points three times before the Cowgirls fought back to tie the game at 21 during a six-point run behind the serve of sophomore Lindsey

six straight times in Goodland's first game against Colby to increase the Cowgirls' lead from 12-8 to 18-8.

Photos by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

Shields. That run ended with Goodland leading 24-21. The Buffaloes scored the next two points but then hit the subsequent serve out to give the Cowgirls the game 25-23.

In the second game the teams fought to a 13-all tie, after which the Lady Buffaloes scored 12 of the next 16 points to win 25-17 and tie the match at one game apiece.

In the tournament's final game, the Cowgirls jumped out to a 7-3 lead only to see Rawlins County tie the game at 11, then take a one-point lead before Goodland tied it back up at 12. After that, the Cowgirls held the lead until the Buffaloes managed to tie the game again at 23. However, the Cowgirls took the

next point stopping a four-point run by Rawlins County, then Jordan served up the winning point and the Cowgirls became the league's tournament champion.

Goodland travels to Hugoton on Saturday for the substate tournament. The other teams in the field are Colby, Larned, Pratt, Russell, Scott City and Ulysses. None of them is ranked among the top teams in Class 4A by the Kansas Volleyball Association.

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