

By Christy Sheets

Sports Writer

The Wallace Wildcats began their bid for the state tournament on Monday, Nov. 2 in North Platte. Due to the fact that the Cats won Conference, they were the number one seed in their sub-districts, and they earned a bye in the first round.

The Lady Cats' first opponent, in the second round, was the Tigers of Maywood, who bested the Cardinals of Hayes Center in the first round.

In the first set the Wildcats started out slow, but it didn't take long for the ladies to pull ahead 8 to 2 on a 5-point service run of junior Shanice Harris. The Tigers battled back, but the Wildcats continued to lead, slowly strengthening their position. The Cats closed the set 25 to 14.

In the second set, the Tigers were ready to retaliate, taking the lead 6 to 8. Junior Katelynn Hild rallied the Cats, and with a 9-point service run, she gave the Cats the lead, 16 to 8. The Tigers were scrappy and refused to go away quietly, but the Cats maintained the lead to close the set 25 to 17.

In the third set the Cats came out strong, taking the early lead on a 6-point service run by junior Laura O'Brien, 6 to 0. Senior Katie West served for five more to give the Cats an 11-point lead, 12 to 1. The



Tigers were tired, this being their second match of the night, but they refused to give up, unfortunately for them the Cats were too tough, closing the set 25 to 11.

When asked about the game, Coach Strand said, "We did what we came to do, win, and play again tomorrow. This is the first time that the Cats have had 20 wins in a season."

Leading the team offensively against Maywood was West with 11 points (2 aces), followed closely by Hild with 10 points (1 ace), and O'Brien with 9 points (2 aces). Aylward and Harris each had 6 points (1 ace), and Smith had 5 points.

Leading the team with set assists was Hild with 18, followed by O'Brien with 15.

Defensively, Aylward led the team with 11 kills and 3 blocks, followed closely by Smith with 9 kills, and West with 8 kills and 2 blocks. Harris had 4 kills, Hild, O'Brien, and Hochstetler each had 1 kill.

Wallace vs.

Hitchcock County

The Wallace Wildcats were then set to play Tuesday night against the hard-hitting Falcons of Hitchcock County. Again the Cats played in North Platte, in the St. Pats High School gym.

The Lady Cats had faced the Falcons once before this season. They faced off in the conference semi-finals, and in that meeting the Cats took the win in four sets. Primed for a battle, both teams took the court with high expectations.

The Cats started the match determined to win. They seemed to have springs in their feet. They picked up everything, and blocked everything else. They took the early lead, and simply refused to relinquish it. The set came to a close 25 to 9, on a well placed tip by Aylward.

In the second set, the Falcons seemed determined to rally, taking the early lead 5 to 7, but a 7-point service run by Hild shifted the tides, giving the Lady Cats the lead 12 to 7.

The Wildcats led for the rest of the set, playing with a desire that seemed to be missing in their

last two matches, closing the set 25 to 18 as the Falcons hit the ball out of play in frustration.

In the third set the Falcons seemed to sense the end of their season getting far too close as they battled to keep up with a talented Wallace team, tying the Cats at 14.

It was then that the Cats decided to make their move, gaining momentum with every point, determined to end the match in straight sets. The Falcons never gave up the fight, but the Cats were just too strong. The Cats won the third set, and the match, 25 to 19.

"The girls played an awesome game," said Coach Rohde "We played a great game. The girls picked up everything, and blocked really well against a talented team."

Leading the team offensively against Hitchcock County was Hild with 15 points (2 aces), followed by West with 11 points (1 ace). Aylward had 7 points, O'Brien had 6 points, Harris had 5 points (3 aces), and Smith had 3 points (1 ace). Leading the team with set assists was O'Brien with 15, followed by Hild with 11, and Aylward with 1.

Defensively, West led the team with 9 kills and 4 blocks, followed closely by Aylward with 8 kills and 2 blocks. Smith had 6 kills, and Harris had 4 kills.

Wallace vs. Sargent

Because the Cats won their sub-districts, they won the right to play in the district finals game. The Lady Cats traveled to Gothenberg to face the Bulldogs of Sargent, on Thursday night. The Lady Cats packed their side of the gym, and the noise was electric.

In the first set the Wildcats got the first point, but the Bulldogs quickly answered back. Senior Katie West fueled the Cats' momentum with an early 5-point service run, taking the Cats to 7 to 1. The Bulldogs battled back to within three, but the Cats played tough, hitting the floor, and jumping to new heights.

A block by West signaled the end of the first set, 25 to 20, and the crowd went wild.

In the second set, the Cats once again struck early, taking a 5 to 1 lead. The Bulldogs began to make a run, but setter Laura O'Brien extended the Cats' lead with a 9-point service run to bring the Cats to 21 to 10. Once again West ended the set, pounding the ball to the court, 25 to 11.

In the third set the Bulldogs seemed determined to keep their state dreams alive, leading the Cats 9 to 12.

This time it was senior leader, Jena Aylward, who stepped up to refocus the Cats with a 5-point service run to give the Cats the lead 14 to 12. The Bulldogs battled back to tie the Cats at 16, but O'Brien again broke the set open for the Cats with a 6-point run, to bring the score to 23 to 16.

The Bulldogs tried to stop the bleeding, but it was too late. The Cats won the set 25 to 17.

Our girls truly showed what they were made of in this match, our hitters and blockers were up for the challenge, and our setters refused to let the ball drop. It was phenomenal. Because the Cats are currently leading the state in points for D2, and they won their district, they will have the number one seed in the state tournament.

Leading the team offensively against Sargent was O'Brien with 21 points (4 aces), followed by West with 12 points (3 aces). Aylward had 8 points (3 aces), Smith had 6 points (1 ace), and Hild and Harris each had 1 point. Leading the team with set assists were Hild and O'Brien each with 12.

Defensively, West led the team with 15 kills and 7 blocks, followed by Aylward with 2 kills and 6 blocks, and Harris and Smith each had 1 block.

State Tournament

The Lady Cats will begin their battle in Lincoln on Thursday, Nov. 12 at 6:30 CST at Lincoln

Southeast.

The Lady Cats are set to play Dodge.