



By Christy Sheets

Sports Writer

The Wallace Wildcats began their bid for the state tournament on Monday, Oct. 4, in McCook. The Wildcats were the number two seed in the sub-district. Their opponent was the Cardinals of Hayes Center, who were the number three seed in the D2-9 sub-district.

Wallace vs. Hayes Center

In the first set the Wildcats started out ready to play, and the ladies were able to pull ahead 9-2 on a seven-point service run by senior Sara Hubbard. The Cardinals battled back, but the Wildcats continued to lead, slowly strengthening their position. The Cats closed the set 25-20.

In the second set, the Raiders were ready to retaliate, taking the lead 17-11. The Lady Cats tried to rally, but the cardinals were scrappy and refused to go away quietly, and maintained the momentum. The Cards won the second set 25-16.

In the third set both teams came out strong, exchanging rally point to 10. Senior Alexandria Lundvall served four points to give the Cats their first real lead of the set. The Cardinals refused to give up, unfortunately for them, the Cats were too tough, closing the set 25-20.

The fourth set was another battle. Both teams were hitting hard, and refused to let the ball hit the court. Junior Morgan Messersmith put together a three-point service run to give the Cats their first lead of the game 11-8. The Cardinals continued to battle, but the Lady Cats could sense the blood in the water. Freshman libero Maggie May stood tough in the service position, and served three in-a-row to give the Wildcats their first win in the sub-district tournament. The Cats won the forth set 25-17.

When asked about the game, Wallace coach Elizabeth Strand said, "We finally put together a complete game against a tough Hayes Center team."

She added, "The girls played like a team, and got the job done when it counted."

Leading the team offensively against Hayes Center was senior Sara Hubbard with 10 points (two aces), followed closely by senior Alexandria Lundvall (two aces), and junior Morgan Messersmith (two aces) each with nine points. Junior Mickayla Sheets (one ace), and freshman Maggie May (one ace) each had seven points, and junior Christina Daniels had (one ace) four points. Leading the team with set assists was Lundvall with 32, followed by Sheets with five.

Defensively, Daniels led the team with 16 kills and four blocks. Junior Hayley Storm had eight

kills, Hubbard had seven kills and one block, senior Paige Aylward had four kills and three blocks, Lundvall had one kill, and Sheets had one block.

Wallace vs. Wauneta/Palisade

The Wallace Wildcats were then set to play Tuesday night against the hard-hitting Broncos of Wauneta-Palisade. Again the Cats played in McCook. The Lady Cats had faced the Broncos three times before this season, losing each one of the prior three, and to say they wanted another chance to play them was an understatement. 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 7-2 on a five-point service run by Hubbard, and simply refused to relinquish it. The Broncos battled back, but the Cats took the first set 25-14.

In the second set, the Broncos seemed determine to rally, taking the early lead 15-10. The Wildcats struggled to find the spark they had in the first set, but they continued to battle. The Broncos were unwavering, and took the first set 21-25.

In the third set, the Broncos again took the early-determined lead 6-2. The Lady Cats rallied late in the set 15-16, but the Broncos answered right back to extend their lead 15-21. The Cats continued to battle, and really began to gain momentum, but the Broncos won the third set 25-20.

In the fourth set, the Cats seemed to build on the momentum they found late in the third set. They took the early lead 12-6. The Broncos just couldn't string any serves together, and the Cats were relentless. In the end the Lady Cats won the fourth set 25-14.

In the fifth set the Broncos 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 four. It was then that the Cats decided to make their move, gaining momentum with every point, determined to end the match with a win. The Broncos never gave up the fight, but the Cats were just too strong. The Cats won the fifth set, and the match, 15-8.

When asked about the game, coach Strand said, "It all came together at the right time. A solid win over a great team."

Leading the team offensively against Wauneta-Palisade was Daniels with 12 points (one ace), followed closely by Sheets with 11 points (one ace). Hubbard (one ace) had nine points, Lundvall (one ace) had eight points, May had six points, and Messersmith (one ace) had three points. Leading the team with set assists was Lundvall with 57, followed by Sheets with four, and Daniels with one.

Defensively, Daniels led the team with 30 kills and six blocks, followed by Storm with 20 kills and one block. Hubbard had 10 kills, and Aylward had four kills and two blocks.

Wallace vs. Paxton

Because the Cats won their sub-districts, they won the right to play in the D2-5 district finals game. The Lady Cats traveled to Grant to face the Paxton Tigers, on Thursday, Nov. 7, night. The Lady Cats packed their side of the gym, as did the Tigers, and the noise was electric.

Both teams started the match with nervous excitement, each team serving the ball out of bounds to start the match. Daniels was the first hitter to strike, sending a resounding kill to the court.

The Lady Cats played hard, but the Tigers weren't willing to give them much room. The Wildcats were tied with the Tigers at 14, and the Tigers put together a four-point run. After a well-placed time-out, and a kill by Storm, Sheets was able to string together three serves to tie

the game at 18.

The Tigers rallied back 23-20, but Aylward blocked the Tigers to shift the momentum back to the Cats. May followed with an ace serve, and Daniels slammed the ball to the court to tie the set once again at 23. Holzfaster, the Tiger setter, put an end to the run with a quick dumpset that caught the Cats off-guard, and gave Paxton their first chance at set point.

The Wildcats dug deep, and refused to let the ball hit the court, and Daniels managed to get an ace block to tie the set at 24. The Tigers pulled ahead once more on a lift call, but the Wildcats wanted the first set. With three kills in a row the Cats took the first set 27-25.

In the second set, the Tigers took the early lead 3-1, but the Wildcats didn't get down, and rallied to tie the set at seven on a kill from Storm. It was then that the Cats seemed to gain some momentum, and after a kill from Daniels, Paxton Coach Rohdes decided to take a time-out to rally his team at 21-16. The Cats refused to let up, as the next point saw Daniels pounding one off the block. The Cats led the Tigers 24-18, but it was the Tigers turn to rally, and they came charging back 24 -21. Luckily for the Cats, the Tigers served out to end the set 25 to 21.

In the third set, the Tigers again took the early-determined lead 4-1. The Lady Cats rallied late in the set, and after a kill from Hubbard the score was tied at 14. The Cats continued to battle, and really began to gain momentum, and at 21-18 Rohdes once again decided to take a time-out to rally his team.

Both teams seemed to get a little tentative, as both teams missed a serve at 23-20, but the Cats regrouped and refused to let the set get away from them. After a long rally, with the Wildcat fans chanting "I Believe..." Storm bounced one off the block to give the Lady Cats the win. The Lady Cats won the third set and the match 25-21. The Wildcats are the 2013 D2-5 District Champions.

When asked about the game, coach Strand said, "It was a great team effort, and everyone did her job. The girls played relaxed, and didn't let getting behind by one or two points get them down."

She continued, "I had a good feeling about today, but they surpassed my expectations. It was a great week to be a Wildcat. Roll Cats!"

When team captain Christina Daniels was asked about their upcoming trip to Grand Island to face number one seed Bertrand, she said, "We all know its not going to be easy. In practice next week we need to push ourselves, and we just have to go in with confidence and momentum."

Leading the team offensively against Paxton was May with eight points (one ace), followed by Daniels with seven points. Hubbard and Sheets each had five points, Messersmith had four points, and Lundvall had three points. Leading the team with set assists was Lundvall with 40, followed by Daniels and Sheets each with two.

Defensively, Daniels led the team with 22 kills and two blocks, followed by Storm with 14 kills and one block. Hubbard had seven kills and three blocks, and Aylward had two kills and two blocks.

Next Action

The Lady Cats headed to Grand Island to start their bid for the state title.

They played on Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at Grand Island Northwestern. Their first opponent was number one seed Bertrand.

