

Lady Bulldogs Finish Second at League Tournament

By Judy Rogers

The Lady Bulldogs spent a very long day in Palco and Damar as they battled their way to a second place finish in the Western Kansas Liberty League Tournament on October 19. The girls boarded the bus at 6:30 am as they traveled east for the 9:00 am start of pool play. The Western Kansas Liberty League was slated to be a very competitive tournament as it included five teams ranked in the top ten of the Kansas Volleyball Association's Week 6 rankings.

The girls' first game in pool play was against the fifth ranked Weskan Lady Coyotes. The Lady Bulldogs, who were ranked 6th in this poll, toppled the Lady Coyotes in three sets. Weskan won the first set 25-21, but the Golden Plains girls battled back to win the second set 27-25, and finished off with a 25-19 win.

The second game in pool play was against the Western Plains Lady Bobcats. The girls worked hard in the first set to win 25-22 and easily claimed the win with a 25-8 win in the second set. The third game against Triplains/Brewster was also easily won 25-12, 25-15. Palco challenged the girls in the final game of pool play, but the Lady Bulldogs held on 25-17, 25-23 to win their pool and head into the semi-finals to confront the Northern Valley Lady Huskies. These two teams had met twice this season with the fourth ranked Huskies victorious in both contests. "We knew we were going to have to play our best game to get to the finals," said senior Hailee Spresser. "We had been playing together as a team all week and were unwavering in our determination to play the final games."

The long day was wearing on the girls as they lost the first set 19-25. They regrouped and refocused as they stepped back on the floor for the second set. Working together as a team, the girls won the second set 25-18. Demonstrating why they are also ranked in the top ten teams in the state, the Lady Bulldogs won the third game 25-16 and a turn in the championship game.

As the day wore on, the Lady Bulldogs energy was waning, but the girls were not about to go down without a fight as they ran on the court with all the energy they could muster for a 10:00 pm championship contest against the Wheatland/Grinnell Lady Thunderhawks. The Lady Bulldogs had defeated the sixth ranked Lady 'Hawks on Tuesday in Dighton, and the Lady 'Hawks were ready for the rematch after having a pool play game forfeited earlier in the day. The Lady 'Dogs won the first set 25-22, but as the night deepened, the Lady 'Hawks tapped into their reserve strength to win the second set 25-18 and claim the championship 25-13 in the third set.

I am so proud of these girls!" said Coach Orba Smith. "Fourteen hours and six matches later...they brought the second place plaque back to Golden Plains!" She added, "Thanks to all the fans who were there to support us!" The Lady Bulldogs will head to sub-state at Sharon Springs this Saturday to compete for a trip to the state tournament. Many of these same teams will be competing including Cheylin, Triplains/Brewster, Wheatland/Grinnell, Wallace County, and Weskan. The Lady Bulldogs have a #2 seed in the tournament and will have a bye for the first round. Games begin at 2:00 pm central time.