

Lady Bulldogs Win Gove County Championship

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs claimed the Championship title of the Gove County Classic Volleyball Tournament in Grainfield by going undefeated 5-0 at the tournament. This was their first time to win the championship since the tournament began in 2014. They placed runner-up in 2020, 2019, and 2015.

“Winning this tournament is just the beginning of a great season,” said senior Kassie Miller. “I think we have done a good job of having an attacking mindset and playing well together.”

The first game of pool play was against the Wilson Lady Dragons. Following a 3-2 lead in the first set, senior Rayna Taylor went on a 10-point serve streak to give the Dogs a 12-2 lead. With six freshmen on their team, the Dragons were unable to match the experience of the Bulldogs’ senior-laden team as the Dogs won 25-6. The Dragons put up more points in the second set the Bulldogs were able to win 25-16.

The second game of pool play was against the Decatur Community Red Devils from Oberlin. The first set was a closely contested match as the Bulldogs led 23-18. The Red Devils didn’t give up as they fought their way back to tie the game up repeatedly. With kills from senior Kassie Miller, the Dogs finally pulled ahead for the 31-29 win.

The Dogs started the second set with a small lead before the Red Devils took over to pull ahead 20-8. The Dogs worked their way back into the game but Oberlin claimed the second set 25-19 sending the match to a third set. With both teams playing with determination, the game stayed tied throughout the first half of the game. Following an ACE serve from Taylor and a kill from senior Morgan Wark, the Dogs pulled ahead 18-14 which would be their biggest lead of the game. Despite Oberlin’s efforts, the Dogs held on for the win 25-22.

The final game of the pool was against the host team Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks. This game was another closely contested three-set match-up. The Oberlin game took a lot of energy from the Bulldogs as they dropped the first set 19-25 to the Hawks. The second set was all about the Bulldogs as they took the lead early on and never backed down as they blocked at the net and served up repeated ACE serves. The Bulldogs maintained control to the final 25-15 win.

The third set was still all about the Dogs. They opened with a 6-0 lead. The Hawks worked their way back into the game making it a one point game at 11-10 before the Dogs regained control and won the set and the game and the pool 25-18.

The girls had the opportunity to catch their breath for just a few minutes before advancing to play the runner-up team from the Grinnell pool. They faced the Cimarron Lady Bluejays. The Bulldogs were on a roll and easily defeated the Bluejays in two sets 25-16, 25-12 to advance to the championship game.

The Dogs matched up with Wheatland/Grinnell for the second game of the day for the championship game. With a three set win earlier in the day, the Dogs were determined to claim the win. This was another exciting, three-set game as the Bulldogs won the first set 25-22. The Hawks came back in the second set to claim a 25-20 victory. As the gym heated up for both teams, the Lady Bulldogs took a 9-4 lead early in

the third set. The Hawks worked throughout the game, but could not match the Bulldogs energy and enthusiasm as the Dogs claimed the championship with a 25-14 win.

“I’m very proud of our team for winning this tournament,” said Breanna Rath, “especially because we feel some people have doubted our ability. We showed everyone that we can show up and we can play with some of the better teams in northwest Kansas.”

The Bulldogs hold a 14-1 season record and are ranked third in the KVA state poll in Class 1A Division II. They return to their season on September 14 to play the #4 Class 1A Division I ranked Victoria Knights and the Northern Valley Huskies in Almena.