

Five Lady Bulldogs Named To All League Teams By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs finished their volleyball season with a 32-7 record. With a strong group of seniors, they had five players named to the Western Kansas Library League All-League volleyball team.

Seniors Kassie Miller and Carli Nieman were each named to the 1st team. Miller, who was named all-league first team her sophomore and junior years and honorable mention as a freshman, completed the 2021 season with 52 ACE serves and a 93% serve percentage. She had 281 kills, 287 assists, and 307 digs.

“I am very thankful for the recognition I have received over my last four years of volleyball,” said Miller. “Thank you to my teammates throughout the years who helped me develop as a player and leader.”

“This is Kassie's third season to be named to the WKLL 1st team,” said Coach Ashley Arnberger. “Kassie led the team in kills and also had the highest passing rating on the team. I loved to see her continue to work on the range and effectiveness of her swing as well as on the placement of her serve. I think her work in both of these areas increased her overall effectiveness as a player and helped her to lead this team. Kassie's hard work and high expectations helped to set the tone for the work that this team put in every day in the gym.”

Kassie was selected to play in the Northwest Kansas All-Star Volleyball game in Colby on November 14.

Nieman, was all-league second team last year and completed 43 ACE serves with a 90% serve percentage this year. She also had 35 blocks, 162 kills, and 222 digs for the Lady Bulldogs in her final season as a Bulldog. “Being named first-team as a senior meant a lot and felt like a great way to end my senior season,” said Nieman. “I feel like I worked really hard this season and improved a lot from last year and I think being named first-team reflects that.”

“I thought Carli really came alive with her swing about mid-season,” said Arnberger. “I loved getting to see her competitive spirit and confidence continue to grow and shine. She became very effective for the team as a middle hitter and blocker. I saw Carli grow so much over this past year. This summer I started asking Carli to play some back row and pass more in serve receive. There were times when she wasn't always comfortable, but she really stepped up this aspect of her game this season.”

Carli was also selected to play in the Northwest Kansas All-Star Volleyball game in Colby on November 14.

Senior Morgan Wark was named to the 2nd team for the league. She was named honorable mention last year. She completed 43 ACE serves for the Lady Bulldogs this year and led the team with a 97% serve percentage. Morgan had 158 kills, 17 blocks, and 283 digs. “Since freshman year, I have worked incredibly hard to make the all-league team,” said Wark. “Being named 2nd team is such an honor and an amazing way to end my high school volleyball career.”

“Morgan worked really hard to become a six-rotation player,” said Arnberger. “Until this season, she had minimal experience playing back row, and she knew that she wanted to play six rotations her senior season. She especially worked hard on her court movement in coverage and serve receive. Morgan had the highest percentage of made

serves on the team with 97%. She also worked to become very accurate with her serve placement. I loved watching Morgan's passion for volleyball continue to evolve through this season.”

Senior Rayna Taylor was named Honorable mention. Taylor had 26 ACE serves and a 91% serve percentage. She had 9 blocks, 448 assists, and 200 digs her senior season. “I am thankful for being recognized this year,” said Taylor. “Thank you to my coaches and teammates who helped me become the player I am!”

“Rayna's role on the team also expanded during her senior season,” said Arnberger. “Rayna was our number one setter and her stats showed that. She ended with a team-high 448 assists on the year. During this season, Rayna also became a six-rotation player. Over the past year, Rayna worked very hard to expand her setting range, but also on developing her attack. I loved seeing Rayna's increased confidence and enjoyed watching her more openly celebrate her team's successes on the floor. Rayna has very natural setter's hands, but she worked incredibly hard to effectively place the ball. I just love to watch her set the ball!”

Junior Breanna Rath one of only three non-senior athletes to be named to the WKLL All-League teams along with Kerri Heier and Karoline Schroeder from Wheatland/Grinnell. She was named Honorable Mention. Rath tied Miller with 52 ACE serves this season and led the team with 308 digs. She had a 93% serve percentage, 114 kills, and 29 assists. “I am happy to be recognized and I’m very proud of my other teammates who were recognized as well,” said Rath. “I met a lot of my personal goals this season.”

“I was so pleased for Bre to get this recognition,” said Arnberger. “As mentioned, she was one of only three athletes recognized by the league who are not seniors. Bre had a big jump in responsibility from her sophomore to junior season. Bre had to carry a lot of our back row defensive load this season and really stepped up to the challenge in both serve receive and coverage. She also really worked to increase the consistency and effectiveness in her swing. Bre can jump out of the gym, so I'm excited to see her continue to expand her hitting range as well as defensive presence into next season.”

“Overall, this past season was full of highs,” continued Arnberger. “All of the girls came into the gym every day with the focus to get better and expand their individual skills and knowledge of the game. I am so very proud of the hard work, growth, and success that this team achieved.”