

## Lady Bulldogs Secure Fourth Healy Championship By Breanna Rath

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs opened their 2022 volleyball season at the Healy Tournament on August 27. They went 5-0 on the day and claimed the Championship for the 4th consecutive year. "It was a great start to the season and we worked very hard," said Hayden Wark. "There's definitely room for improvement, but I believe we can accomplish great things."

To start the day, the Lady Bulldogs took on the Rolla Lady Pirates. This is the only time the Pirates and the Bulldogs face each other in the season. The Bulldogs defeated the Pirates in two sets 25-23, 25-14.

The Bulldogs played back-to-back games and took on the Otis-Bison Lady Cougars. The Bulldogs and the Cougars fought back and forth to keep the ball. A nice four serve run by Senior McHaley Carter boosted the Bulldogs' confidence and gave them the lead they needed to secure the 25-22 win in the first set. Bound and determined to obtain the victory in two sets, the Bulldogs fought hard. The Cougars responded to the Bulldogs intensity by stepping up their game as well. Never falling behind, the Bulldogs secured the second set with a close 26-24 win.

The third and final game of pool play was against Deerfield. With energy and excitement, the Bulldogs quickly claimed a 25-9 victory over the Deerfield Lady Spartans. The second set started well for the Bulldogs as Senior Breanna Rath quickly fired a cross court kill on the Spartans. After a few more volleys, Sophomore Anette Hernandez-Lopez delivered an evil cross court attack to take the 8-7 lead. The Bulldogs kept up their intensity and managed a 25-21 win.

Going undefeated in pool play, the Bulldogs were fired up and ready to take on the Greeley County Lady Jackrabbits in the semi-finals. The Bulldogs and the Jackrabbits will see each other several times throughout the 2022 season. The ball went back and forth to start the first set. With good effort and hustle by Sophomore Hayden Wark, the Bulldogs were able to stick with the Jackrabbits, though it wasn't enough to secure a win. The first set ended 23-25.

With a tenacious state of mind, the Bulldogs were ready to compete in the second set. Smart placement by Wark and Senior Sidney Taylor gave the Bulldogs a nice 19-12 lead against the Jackrabbits. After some close volleys, the Bulldogs claimed a 25-20 victory to take the Jackrabbits to three sets.

The Bulldogs maintained a steady six point lead throughout the first half of the final set. Junior Jordyn Fleckenstein came alive at the net and offered several solid blocks on the Jackrabbits. Shortly after, a collision at the net sent Fleckenstein to the bench with an injured ankle. The Bulldogs continued to work hard on the floor and pushed the Jackrabbits into using their last time out, giving Fleckenstein enough time to recover.

The Jackrabbits pulled themselves together and managed to obtain their first lead of the game, the Bulldogs trailing 21-22. Both teams fighting tooth and nail, the ball went back and forth. Finally, a well-placed tip by Taylor secured the 30-28 win for the Lady Bulldogs.

Advancing to the championship game, the Bulldogs, once again, took on the Otis-Bison Lady Cougars. This was the third game in a row for the Bulldogs, but they never lost sight of the end prize as they captured a 25-20 win in the first set. With their remaining energy, the Lady Bulldogs fought hard for another 25-20 win to take the Championship for the fourth consecutive year.

"Although we have room to improve, the shows what we are capable of with our eight dedicated girls," said Jordyn Fleckenstein, junior. "Winning the championship four years in a row shows the strength of our program and how hard we work in practice." The Lady Bulldogs

will continue their season on Tuesday, August 30, with a quad in Logan against Logan, Triplains/Brewster, and Ness City.