

Bulldogs Finish Season at Sub-State

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs finished their volleyball season with a close match against Northern Valley at Sub-State in Rexford on October 24.

The Bulldogs entered the sub-state tournament with a 21-12 record ranked #3 in the Sub-State. They, Logan, and Northern Valley were all ranked in the top ten in Class 1A Division II state rankings according to the Kansas Volleyball Association, so they knew it would be a tournament filled with excellent volleyball action.

"I believe I can safely say that we hosted one of the most competitive 1A-DII sub-state tournaments, with three top 10 ranked teams in the state as well as three other extremely good teams," said Coach Orba Smith.

The Bulldogs faced off against Cheylin for the first round of play. The Bulldogs got off to a slow start as the Cougars pulled ahead in the first set 11-5. The Bulldogs stayed with their game and worked their way back to a 13-13 tie before pulling ahead 21-15. The Cougars didn't give up and made the first set close 25-23 with a Bulldog win. The Cougars took an early lead in the second set also, but again the Bulldogs stayed with what they had been doing all season and won the set and the match 25-19. "We were a little concerned during the Cheylin game," said senior Maddy Walz, "but we got our nerves out before the Northern Valley games."

The Bulldogs advanced to the semi-final round to face the Northern Valley Huskies who had had a bye for the first round. "We knew we had nothing to lose," added Walz. "We left it all on the court." The Bulldogs had faced the Huskies three times earlier this season, losing all in two sets. They were determined to leave it all on the floor and played some of their best games of the season. The first set stayed close with teams trading serves. The score remained tied for much of the game but the Huskies pulled ahead for the 25-18 win.

The 'Dogs didn't give up and grabbed an early lead in the second set. The Huskies answered with another game of ties and slight leads. The Bulldog crowd cheered the girls on with enthusiasm as they pulled ahead for the 25-22 win sending the match into a third set.

The excellent play by both teams continued in the third set. The Bulldogs led to start the set. The Huskies tied it up at 11, pulled ahead, only to have the 'Dogs tie it back up. The 'Dogs continued to lead until the Huskies tied the game at 21. The Huskies finished the game with four consecutive points to win 25-21. The Huskies advanced to play top-seeded Logan Trojans in the championship game. Logan won in three sets to qualify for the state tournament this week.

. "The girls played some of their best volleyball of the season against Northern Valley in the semi-final match," added Smith. "I'm very proud of them for that! I'm disappointed for the team that we couldn't advance out of sub-state because I feel we would have competed well at the State Tournament in Hays."

"Even though we lost," continued Walz, "I'm super proud of the seniors and underclassmen." "I was really proud of how hard we worked this season," said Brianna Stoll, senior. "Everyone tried hard every day." Stoll continued, "Today might not have went as we wanted it to, but I'm really happy with how we finished

the season. We left everything on the court. I'm excited to watch the girls play next season."

"This year was the most enjoyable season I've had," said Kami Miller, senior. We played with a lot of emotion and heart each and every game." "I want to thank all of our friends, family, and most of all, our coaches," added Miller. "We couldn't have been as successful without you." "It's been a great four years," added Walz. "I wish the best for future seasons." "I am proud of who we became as a team and as athletes," said Kynndra Rush. "We finished the season very strong and I am proud of how we played."

"I seriously cannot say enough good things about this year's team," concluded Smith. "Our seniors were absolutely amazing leaders. They expected so much from themselves, and supported and encouraged the underclassmen to achieve more each day. This is one of those years, as a coach, I'm just not ready for the volleyball season to be over! Besides being awesome athletes and volleyball players, these girls are remarkable individuals!"