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2022 STATE CLASS B GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

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Above: Kaiya O'Connor, Kelsie Belquist, Madisen Myhre and Kyria Dockter pose in the bus, before heading to the state volleyball tournament. **Right:** Lucy Meier (center) speaks about her love of the student section support at games during the pep rally. Photos by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Students from New Rockford-Sheyenne made posters and signs for the pep rally on Wednesday, Nov. 16. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



NR-S students donned Rocket gear and showed off their posters/signs as they sent off the Rockets volleyball team to state. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

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NR-S sophomore, Kaiya O'Connor, digs up a ball during the quarterfinal game against Linton/HMB on Thursday, Nov. 17. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

Rockets fall to Linton/HMB in quarterfinals

by Kyrie Dauenhauer

With the luck of the draw, the Rockets were set to take on the No. 2 seeded Linton/HMB Lions in the first round of the Class B Volleyball tournament on Thursday, Nov. 17.

The Rockets knew this would be a hard team to beat, but they kept their heads high and hoped for the best.

The Lions have a similar game scheme to the Rockets, with ShayLee Bosch as their main hitter.

The Rockets came out ready to play. NR-S outside hitter, Kaiya O'Connor, stated before the game, "I think we can beat them, but if we don't, we are here to put on a good show."

The first match of the day brought many jitters for the Rockets, with this being their first appearance at the state tournament. The Lions defeated the Rockets 25-15 in the first set.

Set number two seemed a little more relaxed for the Rockets. The momentum was gaining, although the Rockets came up short in the second set, 19-25.

With no momentum loss af-

ter the second set, the Rockets capsized on the Lions in the third, taking a 4-point win. Players and fans were all jumping for joy.

With this excitement, the Rockets were almost too anxious in the fourth set. This led to Linton/HMB coming back and defeating the Rockets 25-19, to move on in the winners' bracket.

The Rockets were set to take on the Garrison Troopers on Friday, Nov. 18 at 5 p.m.

Many Rockets players scored in double digits in digs against the Lions. O'Connor led the team with 23, with Kelsie Belquist, Peterson, Dockter and Myhre following behind with 21, 13, 12 and 10, respectively.

Belquist held the most kills for the Rockets, with a total of 18.

Digs were a big thing for the Lions, too. Grace Keeney led the Lions with 27 total digs, with Paige Hulm, Emma Schick and Gracie Schumacher following behind with 23, 17 and 12, respectively.

Linton/HMB middle hit-

ter, Shaylee Bosch, scored the most kills for the Lions, with 19 overall.

Class B State Volleyball Quarterfinal
NR-S 1, L/HMB 3
Thursday, Nov. 17
at Bismarck

NR-S: 15 19 25 19 - 1
L/HMB: 25 25 21 25 - 3

NR-S Individual Stats
Aces: Kyria Dockter 3, Kaiya O'Connor 1, Ava Peterson 1.
Assists: Peterson 27, O'Connor 3, Lucy Meier 1, Lora Wobbema 1.
Blocks: Meier 2, Madisen Myhre 1.
Digs: O'Connor 23, Kelsie Belquist 21, Peterson 13, Dockter 12, Myhre 10, Meier 2.
Kills: Belquist 18, Wobbema 6, Peterson 4, O'Connor 2, Myhre 2, Meier 2.

Linton/HMB Individual Stats
Aces: Emma Schick 2, Grace Keeney 1, Gracie Schumacher 1.
Assists: Schumacher 46, Shaylee Bosch 2, Paige Hulm 1, Schick 1.
Blocks: Hulm 2, Kaylee Weninger 1.
Digs: Keeney 27, Hulm 23,



Kelsie Belquist (left), Madisen Myhre (center) and Ava Peterson (right) celebrate after an out-standing kill by Belquist. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Madisen Myhre (left) and Lucy Meier (right) leap up in an attempt to block a hit from Linton/HMB hitter, Kaylee Weninger. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

Schick 17, Schumacher 12, S. Weninger 9, L. Bosch 7, Weiser 4, Bosch 8, Weninger 6, Emma Schumacher 3.
Weiser 2, Lacey Bosch 1.
Kills: S. Bosch 19, Hulm 9,

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Congrats on a great season Rockets!



Kelsie Belquist (right) poses with little sister, Emmie, after the consolation matchup against Garrison. Kelsie received her 1,000th kill during the second set against the Troopers. Courtesy photo.



Lora Wobbema (9) and Madisen Myhre (11) jump up to block a tip from Garrison middle hitter, Karli Klein. Wobbema led the Rockets in blocks, with a total of four. Myhre followed behind with a total of three. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

TROOPER TAKE DOWN

–Rockets head to consolation championship, Belquist earns 1,000 career kills

by Kyrie Dauenhauer

Day two of the Class B state volleyball tournament brought the New Rockford-Sheyenne Rockets and the Garrison Troopers to the consolation round.

After losing to Linton/HMB the day before, the Rockets showed up to the Bismarck Event Center determined to win the next game against the Troopers.

The first set started off slow, with many errors for the Rockets. At one point, the Troopers led 6-0. This was the only major point gap between the Rockets and the Troopers.

With a kill from Garrison's middle hitter, Karli Klein, the Troopers took set one 25-23.

Set two was more exciting for the Rockets. NR-S junior, Kelsie Belquist, scored her 1,000th kill. While the Rockets were celebrating Belquist's achievement, the referee had blown the whistle to serve. After the five seconds passed, the Troopers were given the ball back, due to the Rockets delay of game.

But this didn't seem to shake the Rockets' momentum.

With an ace by Lucy Meier, the Rockets took down the Troopers 26-24 in the second set.

The next three sets went point-for-point.

The Troopers took the third set 25-23, but the Rockets came back to take the fourth set 25-19, again with an ace by Meier.

The fifth and final set. Who was going to move on to play in the consolation championship?

With Kaiya O'Connor back at the serving line, the Rockets held a 7-0 score before the Troopers could add a point to the scoreboard. But a serving error from O'Connor sent the ball possession back to the Troopers. With a huge block from NR-S middle hitter, Lora Wobbema, the Rockets gained the ball back.

With an unexpected kill from the right side, setter Ava Peterson scored the final point in the fifth set, earning a 15-7 win for the Rockets.

With this win, the Rockets were to move on to the consolation championship to play the Our Redeemer's Knights for fifth and sixth place on Saturday morning.

Class B State Volleyball Consolation

NR-S 3, Garrison 2
Friday Nov. 18
at Bismarck

NR-S: 23 26 23 25 15 - 3
Garrison 25 24 25 19 7 - 2

NR-S Individual Stats

Aces: Kelsie Belquist 4, Kyria Dockter 3, Madisen Myhre 3, Kaiya O'Connor 3, Lucy Meier 3.

Assists: Ava Peterson 42, Myhre 6, Dockter 2, Lora Wobbema 2.

Blocks: Wobbema 4, Myhre 3, Meier 3, Belquist 3, Peterson 2, O'Connor 1.

Digs: Belquist 28, O'Connor 28, Peterson 25, Dockter 21, Myhre 9, Wobbema 1, Meier 1.

Kills: Belquist 23, Wobbema 9, Myhre 9, Meier 8, Peterson 3, O'Connor 2.

Garrison Individual Stats

Aces: Karli Klein 2, Cara Schlehr 2.

Assists: C. Schlehr 36, Corryssa Behles 1.

Blocks: Klein 5.

Digs: Kaitlyn Zook 48, Klein 24, Mason Jessen 23, C. Schlehr 20, Jylianne Striha 13, Anna Holte 11, Behles 9, Rachel Hett 5, Josie Westman 2, Emily Schlehr 2.

Kills: Klein 18, Westman 7, Hett 3, Striha 3, E. Schlehr 3, Candela Garcia 1.



NR-S libero, Kyria Dockter, is shown diving for a ball during the consolation game against the Garrison Troopers. Dockter had a total of 21 digs for the Rockets. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

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Thumbs up for state. Kailar Jacobson (left) and Aaden Benson (right) pose with a sign that says “We made it! State.” Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



NR-S statisticians Emma Duda (left), Bailey Baumbach (center) and Abigail Nystrom (right) have their full focus on the court. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



On the second day of the state volleyball tournament, the NR-S student section showed up in all white for a Rockets’ whiteout. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Above: Mackenzie Allmaras (left) and Megyn Bjerke (right) were two of the many fans to attend the Consolation Championship game against the Our Redeemer's Christian School Knights.

At right: Kaelyn Ystaas sways her arms from side-to-side with her blue and gold pom-poms. Photos by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



NR-S junior, Lucy Meier (center) poses for a snapshot with the Steele sisters: Libby (far left), Leah (left center), Liza (right of Meier), Lucy (front center). Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Hip, Hip, HOORAY! Rockets fans from left to right: Jaida Schumacher, Isla Allmaras, Megan Hultgren (behind), Kaci Weisenburger, Beth Becker, Sophie Skogen, Thaddison Wobbema (behind) and Judy Meier (front) show off their Rocket spirit with gold and blue pom poms. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Haydon Meier poses with a big head of NR-S senior, Ma-disen Myhre. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

2022 NR-S SEASON STATS

MADISEN MYHRE

Season Stats


Aces32

Assists24

Blocks18

Digs147

Kills115



Career Stats

Aces35

Assists43

Blocks77

Digs173

Kills315

Daughter of Eric
& Sara Myhre

#11 - Senior

KYRIA DOCKTER

Season Stats


Aces62

Assists20

Blocks0

Digs505

Kills0



Career Stats

Aces76

Assists20

Blocks0


Digs529

Kills0

Daughter of August
& Georgia Johnson

#19 - Senior

KELSIE BELQUIST



#1 - Junior

Aces49

Assists36


Blocks27

Digs510

Kills607

Daughter of Elliott
& Beth Belquist

LUCY MEIER



#2 - Junior

Aces29

Assists13


Blocks44

Digs124

Kills139

Daughter of Preston
& Mindy Meier

LORA WOBBERMA



#9 - Junior

Aces9

Assists15


Blocks43

Digs42

Kills145

Daughter of Chad
& Amy Wobbema

KAIYA O'CONNOR



#4 - Sophomore

Aces40

Assists572


Blocks7

Digs326

Kills82

Daughter of Anthony
& Kristy O'Connor

AVA PETERSON



#3 - Freshman

Aces63

Assists485


Blocks35

Digs358

Kills139

Daughter of Travis
& Ami Peterson

LOGAN CUDWORTH



#6 - Freshman

Aces17

Assists18

Blocks5

Digs77

Kills17

Daughter of Robert
& Amy Cudworth

Rockets take five at State Class B

-Belquist named to 2022 Class B All Tournament team

by Kyrie Dauenhauer

The New Rockford-Sheyenne Rockets were set to play the first game of the morning on Saturday, Nov. 19 against the Our Redeemer's Knights for fifth and sixth place.

Earlier in the season, the Rockets met up with the Knights at the Laker Invite in Des Lacs-Burlington. By playing them earlier in the season, the Rockets had some knowledge of how the Knights played the court.

The Rockets started off strong, taking the first set 25-22 and the second set 25-19.

The last three sets, however, didn't go so easily.

With an error by Madisen Myhre, the Knights took the third set 25-20. The fourth set ended the same way. Knights outside hitter, Maya Vibeto, served an ace to score the final point of the set, taking a 25-18 win over the Rockets.

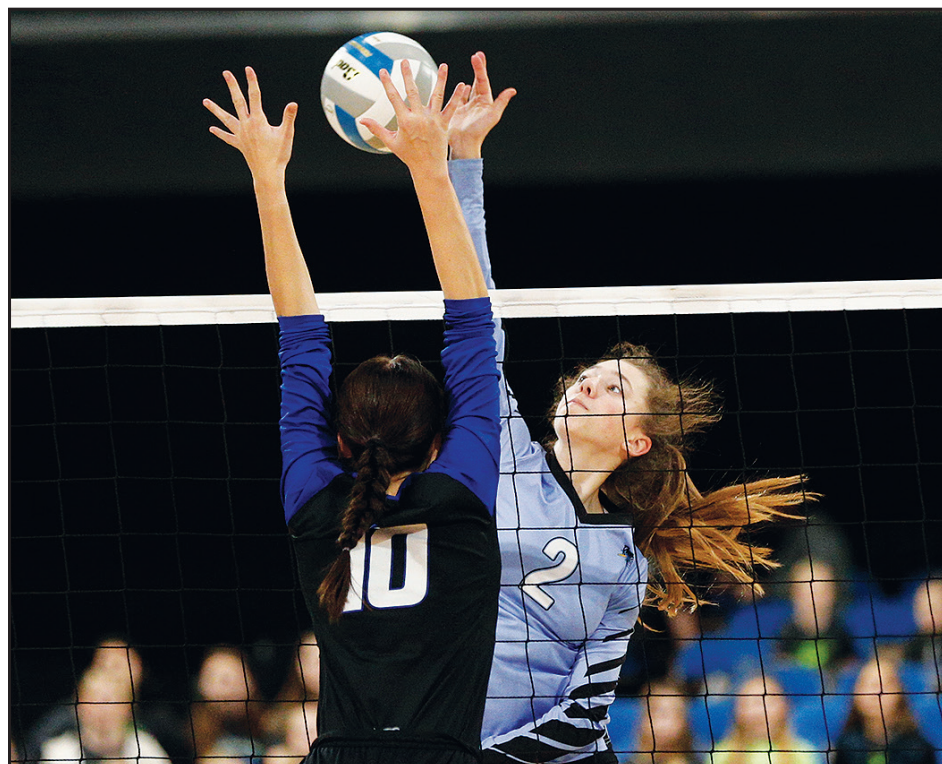
Things got a bit rocky in the final set. With an error on the roster, NR-S libero Kyria Dockter was unable to play. This meant both middle hitters, Lora Wobbema and Lucy Meier, had to play all around. Surprisingly, Wobbema and Meier played like nothing had changed.

Set five started with several errors by the Rockets, giving the Knights a 5-point lead. But the Rockets didn't give up.

With a superior kill by Kelsie Belquist, the Rockets were back in the game.

After a ball handling error for the Knights, Wobbema was sent to serve for the Rockets. An ace! The crowd went wild. The score was now tied 14-14.

Another ball handling error for the Knights. 15-14. One point, that's all the Rockets needed to take home a fifth place trophy. With a hitting error by Knights middle hitter Leah Lindquist, the Rockets



Lucy Meier takes a swing at the ball around the hands of Knights junior, Leah Lindquist. Meier scored a total of seven kills against the Knights. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

had defeated the Knights 16-14, earning a fifth place finish at the Class B state volleyball tournament.

After Northern Cass defeated Linton/HMB in the championship round, the Class B awards were announced.

ShayLee Bosch of Linton/HMB was awarded Class B Senior Volleyball Athlete of the Year. Her coach, Jaime Richter, was named the Class B Volleyball Coach of the Year.

Belquist was among 14 athletes to make the 2022 Class B All Tournament Team. The team includes ShayLee Bosch, Gracie Schumacher and Paige Hulm, Linton/HMB; Halle Crocket, Josie Jensen and Noelle Erickson, Northern Cass; Summer Hegg, Jordan West and Clara Steven, Thompson; Kate Zimmer and Brenna Stoklund, Kenmare; Ava Jahner, Dickinson Trinity; Maya Vibeto, Our Redeemer's Christian School; and Karli

Klein, Garrison. Congratulations to all!

Congratulations to the NR-S coaches, Sara Myhre, Dale Peaslee, Kayahna Hopfauf and Mindy Meier on a great season! This team couldn't have done it without you!

To our two seniors, Madisen and Kyria, thank you for being leaders on this team and showing the underclassmen that making NR-S history is possible. Good luck in your future endeavors.

Class B State Volleyball

Fifth Place

NR-S 3, ORCS 2

Saturday, Nov. 19

at Bismarck

NR-S:	25	25	20	18	16	-	3
ORCS:	22	19	25	25	14	-	2

NR-S Individual Stats

Aces: Kaiya O'Connor 3, Kyria Dockter 3, Ava Peterson 3, Kelsie Belquist 3, Lucy Meier 1, Lora Wobbema 1.

Assists: Peterson 38, Madisen Myhre 3, O'Connor 3, Wobbema 2, Belquist 1.

Blocks: Wobbema 3, Belquist 2, Peterson 2, Meier 1.

Digs: Belquist 20, Dockter 16, O'Connor 15, Myhre 12, Peterson 10, Meier 3, Wobbema 3.

Kills: Belquist 24, Myhre 10, Meier 7, Peterson 4, O'Connor 2, Wobbema 2.

ORCS Individual Stats

Aces: Leah Lindquist 4, Allie Francis 2, Olivia Ebel 1, Mya Borud 1.

Assists: Francis 45, Borud 2, Ebel 2, Lindquist 2, Kiera Biberdorf 2.

Blocks: Lindquist 3, Aubrey Griedl 3.

Digs: Maya Vibeto 28, Ebel 24, Biberdorf 21, Isabel Engelhard 13, Borud 11, Lindquist 7, Griedl 2.

Kills: Lindquist 17, Vibeto 14, Biberdorf 12, Francis 7, Griedl 7, Mikayla Altringer 2, Ebel 1.



After a five set rally, the Rockets players and fans celebrated their fifth place win over the Our Redeemers Knights on Saturday, Nov. 19. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



NR-S seniors Madisen Myhre and Kyria Dockter hug after their final game on the court together. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Kaiya O'Connor (left) leans on Kelsie Belquist (right) after their hard fought win over the Knights. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

The beginning of New Rockford volleyball

by Nathan Price

At the 2022 State B Tournament in Bismarck, this year's New Rockford-Sheyenne volleyball team weren't just representing their community with a fantastic showing, they were also cementing their place in local history.

By advancing to state as regional champs, Kelsie Belquist, Lora Wobbema, Kaiya O'Connor, Kyria Dockter, Madisen Myhre, Ava Peterson and this year's entire team and staff, have done what no other team in the history of New Rockford volleyball could do.

But what exactly is the history of volleyball in New Rockford? When did it start, how has it changed over the years, and what does New Rockford's first volleyball team think of the latest team's success?

When discussing the history of New Rockford's volleyball program, these are just a few of the questions that could come to mind.

As it happens, the "New Rockford Transcript" keeps every newspaper it's ever printed dating all the way back to the 19th century. And in light of NR-S volleyball's history-making success in 2022, it is perhaps the perfect time to answer some of those questions.

The first volleyball recap ever printed in the paper was published in the Transcript's 25th edition of Volume 108 - Saturday, Dec. 14, 1991.

Yes, back in those days volleyball was a winter sport, and began in early December. It had taken the place of gymnastics - a



1991-92 team members (from left to right) – back row standing: Coach Tami Reis, Shelby Belquist, Renee Erickson, Rachael Otto, Chris Manly, Asst Coach Shelley Ehni; middle row: Jennifer Vinnard (Stats), Joayne Larson, Bobbi Boyle, Amy Vorland, Beckett Arnold (Team Manager); front row: Leah Shaefer, Brandi Boyle. Photo courtesy of Joayne Larson.

sport which, back then, was in decline in North Dakota.

According to NRHS Superintendent at the time, Dean Vorland, the New Rockford gym-

nastics team was being forced to undertake longer and longer road trips to compete with the ever-dwindling number of schools with a gymnastics pro-

gram. Meanwhile, volleyball was on the rise.

New Rockford's first-ever volleyball game was played against Midkota at the McHenry school

gymnasium, and it was a decisive victory for the Rockets. Bill Aslakson wrote the game's recap

HISTORY, ON PG 13



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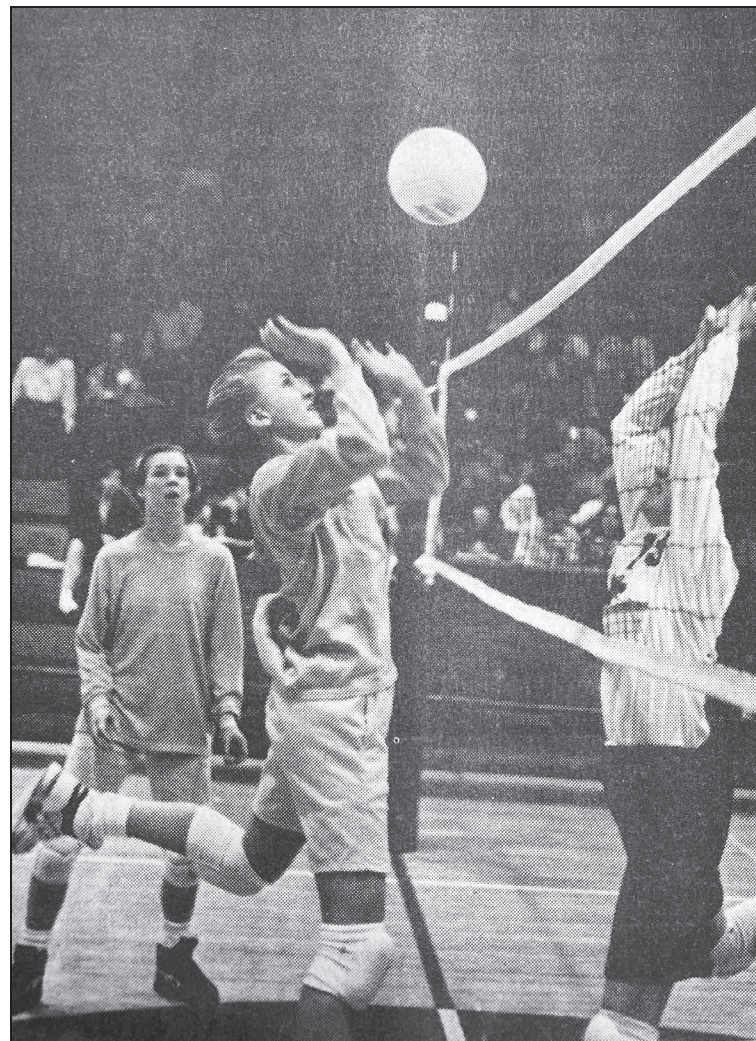
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HISTORY, continued from page 12

in the Dec. 14, 1991 Transcript. ranks of Region 4 volleyball this year, the 11-15, 16-14, 15-9, 15-6



New Rockford setter Amy Vorland knocks one of her match-high four tips over a Rugby blocker, and teammate Renee Erickson is at the ready. Rugby won 3-0, dropping the first-year Rockets to a 6-12 overall record. Transcript file photo.

match was somewhat of a learning experience for everybody, from players and coaches to the good turnout of involved spectators," wrote Aslakson.

"And while doubtlessly much valuable experience was gained Tuesday, New Rockford assistant coach Shelly Ehni said afterwards that one of the lessons the Rockets learned was a very basic one. "They learned they could do it," she smiled."

Playing for New Rockford High School's first volleyball team were Shelby Belquist, Renee Erickson, Rachael Otto, Chris Manly, Joayne Larson, Bobbi Boyle, Amy Vorland, Leah Shaefer and Brandi Boyle. Coaches were Tami Reis and Shelley Ehni.

Joayne Larson, who played with the team for their 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons, said she was excited when it was first announced that volleyball was coming to New Rockford.

"I was excited because I liked volleyball," she said. "I remember that my mom had played in a local volleyball team ... and we had played it in phy-ed classes, so I was super excited to have volleyball be a varsity sport."

Larson added that much has changed about volleyball in the years since she first played as a junior and senior in high school.

Anyone familiar with volleyball will have immediately noticed the strange score line Aslakson included in his article. When volleyball first started in North Dakota, sets were only played to 15 points, not 25 as it is today.

That's largely because the way

scoring worked in volleyball was vastly different than how it works today. In the early 90s, the only way a team could score points was if they were serving.

For the team on defense, even if they returned the opponent's serve and successfully spiked the volleyball over the net, there were no points given, only a change of possession. This often led to long, drawn-out matches that could drag late into the night, even when only playing to 15 points.

Some matches didn't last quite so long, however, which was likely the case when the Rockets played their second match of 1991, and their first ever against the Carrington Cardinals. Fun- nily enough, their match against Carrington was actually meant to be their first in program history - originally scheduled for December 2, 1991 - until it was postponed.

Unlike NRHS and Midkota, the 1991-92 season was not the first for Cardinals volleyball, and it showed.

"In the first official meeting of what promises to become a long and colorful series with Carrington," began Aslakson in the Dec. 21, 1991 Transcript, "the Cardinals breezed to a 15-0 first game before winning the next two for their 3-0 match win."

After the Carrington loss, the Rockets went on to defeat Mad-dock-Esmond two days later in a five-set thriller. Despite their inexperience in volleyball, the Rockets were hanging in there against more experienced teams, while beating a handful of others.

In the end, they managed to end their first season with a 6-12 overall record. And having gained experience, they returned the following season and enjoyed far greater success.

They ended the 1992-93 regular season with a 16-8 overall record, earning a regional tournament showing in Rugby, where they finished in third place with a 3-0 win over Dunseith.

Larson attributed their early success to the team's overall athletic- ism, which was able to shine once they'd gained volleyball experience.

"We had a really strong basketball team," said Larson, "and our starting five from the basketball team was the core of the starting six for the volleyball team. ... We were a strong volleyball team because we were strong athletes."

It's easy to draw comparisons to today's volleyball team. Larson mentioned Rachael Otto by name as a particularly strong basketball player, whose talents translated well to volleyball. Today, Kelsie Belquist, Kaiya O'Connor and others are already winning basketball games just weeks after the state volleyball tournament.

In the three decades since volleyball first came to New Rockford, the Rockets have made several appearances in the third place match at regionals, but hadn't competed in a championship match until this year.

This strong group of female athletes is delivering success on the court; and this time next year, they intend to have achieved even more.



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COACH MYHRE'S CORNER

New Rockford-Sheyenne head volleyball coach Sara Myhre was asked to provide a few general comments to the Transcript of the three state tournament games. Myhre was also asked to give a summary on the NR-S regular season. Here are her responses:

Linton/HMB

"Our nerves really took over the first set, and then we seemed to get more comfortable. We made too many errors that game, and with a team like Linton you just can't make those kind of errors and win. I was happy that we competed with them and took a set, but it was a tough loss, especially the first game."

Garrison

"I didn't know much about Garrison, but I knew that every team we were going to play at state was going to be tough and competitive. We went into five sets with them, and we were able to win the match. Again, the girls were able to finish and not give up. You could tell the girls were more comfortable the second day and the nerves had settled down."

Our Redeemer's Christian School

"We took the first two sets, and then we fell apart the third and fourth set. Going into the fifth set not having our libero because of an error was really disheartening. We started off down by five points right away. I really didn't know what to think at that point. Actually, what I was thinking of was how did I mess this all up! Coach K and the rest of the team on the bench really stepped up and got the girls going in the time outs. And once again the team stepped up and never gave up. I remember thinking, "it's 12 to 14 and Our Redeemer's needed to score just one more point." We came back and beat them 14-16. What a finish at state! We were the Consolation Champions!"

Season Summary

"I knew from the start of the season that the girls had a special bond. They were excited for practice, they all wanted to improve their skills and they couldn't wait to compete."

We played in more competitive tournaments throughout the season which I believe helped them build confidence and mental toughness. We went to the Des Lacs invite only tournament and were able to play some competitive teams like Linton and Our Redeemers. We played in the Devils Lake tournament and took first place, so that was really exciting.

When we lost to a team during the regular season, we really would dig deep to figure out what we could have done differently or what we needed to work on. We switched our offense a couple different times, and then two weeks before regionals I switched three positions. The team adjusted to the changes, but it was not easy, and we worked on a lot those two weeks prior to regionals.

We were the number No. 2 seed going into Regionals. I knew North Prairie and of course Langdon were going to be tough games, but I reminded the girls we had to focus on one game at a time, and our first game was Nelson County. So, our focus was on that game first. We swept Nelson County in three.

The next night was North Prairie in the regular season we went into five sets with them, so I knew it was going to be a tough game. North Prairie digs everything, they cover every inch of the floor, and they are hard to read. That match was intense, but our girls never gave up. We won in the fifth set by only three.

One thing I noticed about our team was that by the end of the season they were able to close/finish a game. In the



NR-S head coach, Sara Myhre, gives the team a pep talk during the quarterfinal match against the Linton/HMB Lions on Thursday, Nov. 17. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.

past we really struggled with that if we went into five sets.

We secured a spot in the championship game for the first time in program history.

I thought we would have a day to reset and focus on Langdon, but due to weather we ended up playing them the next night after the five setter against North Prairie.

One thing about Langdon when we have played them in the past – it's all a mental game. Langdon is a well-coached team. They have a lot of confidence, and they are hard to get out of system. Once they build momentum or any kind of lead, they seem to take off, and it's hard to come back. I knew we had to limit our errors, our serve-receive had to be really good, and we could not feed them free balls. We also had to slow down their best hitter, Cora Badding. We took the first set, which was a huge boost for the girls. Then they took the second, and then we took the third.

I knew I did not want to go into a fifth

set with them. The fourth set we were on, and I could feel all the momentum on our side. I had a feeling when we started that fourth set watching them play that they wanted to win, and nothing was stopping them. Lucy Meier went up to hit the match-winning point to send our team to state. Fans stormed the court, and to see the tears of joy on everyone was one of the most exciting moments I have ever experienced as a coach.

New Rockford-Sheyenne was heading to state for the first time in program history.

I'm so incredibly proud of the entire team. The growth in their skills and the confidence that had grown over the season was so fun to be part of and to watch as a coach. I was so fortunate to be able to coach them to the first ever state appearance in volleyball for NR-S. It was as an unforgettable experience I will cherish forever!"



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ASSISTANT COACHES

Recap the NR-S Rockets' historic season

New Rockford-Sheyenne assistant volleyball coaches Dale Peaslee, Kayahna Hopfauf and Mindy Meier were asked to give a summary on the NR-S regular season. Their answers are below:



Assistant coach Dale Peaslee is shown coaching the girls during the game against Our Redeemer's Christian School. Photo by Amy Wobbema.

Coach Peaslee's Season Summary

"I have heard it said that the one thing that stays constant is change.

That might sum up our year. After the Covid shortened year in (2020) and then having to practice in the Sheyenne gym (2021), I was looking forward to a normal year. Actually, thankfully, it was not normal. We ended with a trip to State!

We had changes after game two and an injury to Madi at the Devils Lake Tourney (which we won anyway), a poor showing at the Des Lacs Tourney, an incredible 5-set win over North Prairie followed by a smack-down from Langdon (more changes made). We had to endure another 5-set win over North Prairie for our Rockets to get to their first ever Region title game against Langdon. This time the girls showed incredible resolve and scaled the mountain called Langdon to head to state for the first time.

Many people had never heard about New Rockford volleyball before State, but they know now. We were able to give No. 2 Linton their first set loss at state in three years, defeated No. 7 Garrison in a 5-set thriller so we could meet Our Redeemers for fifth place. After another 5-set thriller, we earned the consolation trophy.

We can point out stats, milestones, records, and there were some of those. But I have said that volleyball is coordinated cooperation. It takes everybody working and pulling together to make it work.

We are sorry to see our two seniors go, but they have helped set a great standard for the program, and I think we can expect great things next year. I would be amiss if I didn't thank our great fans, especially our student section, that was fun!

Go Rockets!"

Coach Hopfauf's Season Summary

"This volleyball season has been a dream, and I am so happy to be part of it. These girls have worked so hard to accomplish their goals. And we did! We made it to state!

Every single one of these girls contributed. Our seniors, Madi and Kyria, brought so much leadership to the team. Our middles, Lora and Lucy, improved so much over the season that they looked like totally different people by the end of it. Ava P. learned an entirely new position in two weeks and had a "never give up" attitude the entire time. Kelsie could fly through the air on the first pass and then get up and hit at the 10-foot line on the third hit. Kaiya adjusted to us throwing her in a new position and played incredible defense. Emmie and Logan stepped up when we needed them and did so well at a brand-new level. Bailey, Ava B., Alivia, and Addy brought so much excitement and energy to the team by cheering on their teammates through every milestone.

A lot of people doubted these girls, and they let that fuel them into making the impossible, possible. This team came together and made the entire town of New Rockford so proud. We had a lot of challenges, which is normal, but the team never let it defeat them.

I am so proud to be able to have coached these amazing girls and work alongside some of the best – Coach Myhre, Coach Peaslee and Coach Meier. I am so excited to see what else we are going to accomplish in the future."



Assistant coach Kayahna Hopfauf gives Kaiya O'Connor a high five after a timeout was called during the consolation game against Garrison. Photo by Kyrie Dauenhauer.



Assistant coach Mindy Meier busts a move on the bench during the consolation championship game. Photo by Amy Wobbema.

Coach Meier's Season Summary

"Every year, every volleyball season, we are consumed by Langdon. For as long as I've been part of Rocket Volleyball, 14 years, Langdon has been the team we want to beat, but has always been beyond our reach. They're usually out of every team's reach. What Rich Olson has done over the last 25+ years for their volleyball program is quite remarkable.

This year felt no different. The excitement for our regular-season home game against Langdon was palpable. We'd had a good season up until then, winning all our Region games, winning the Devils Lake Tournament and competing well against tough teams in Des Lacs. We felt good. We wanted to see what we could do.

We had a big crowd that night, with lots of energy surrounding this game. Langdon is a fun team to watch. For us Rockets, it was a tough loss. We didn't just lose, we were disappointed because we didn't play even close to our abilities, to what we knew we had in us.

Fast-forward three short weeks to the Region 4 Tournament. We earned the second seed, so would meet Langdon in the championship game. In the semi-final, North Prairie, like every time we've played them this season, was tough competition. They are athletic, scrappy and well-coached; they don't let the ball hit the ground! This is the worst kind of team to play.

Something switched for us that night. We'd already played great physical games, we knew how that felt. But that night, our mental and emotional game shined. We didn't let mistakes get us down. We lifted our teammates when they made mistakes. We didn't get freaked out when we were losing. We were calm and confident, we stayed aggressive and worked hard.

We felt good that Wednesday evening, playing the championship game a day early because of an impending Thursday storm, without an expected practice before playing Langdon. Coach Kay sent the team a motivational talk: Out-communicate the other team. Out-heart them. Out-courage them. And they did. They out-loved each other, they out-lifted each other, they out-celebrated. Our crowd out-cheered. And they won! In FOUR games. It was glorious.

The state tournament was amazing. The support from our community was breathtaking. And we played our best volleyball exactly when we needed to. It was a humbling and beautiful experience, and I thank the players and coaches for bringing me along on this ride."

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