

# Mullin volleyball rebuilds with new coach

**By Mike Lee**  
**Eagle Contributor**

The Mullin Lady Dawgs lost five players, including three seniors, from last year's 31-6 team that reached the regional quarterfinals of the Class 1A volleyball playoffs. They also lost head coach Angie Salinas, who put up a 119-18 record with four playoff berths over the last four seasons.

New head coach Rebecca Sharkey brings 16 years of experience in New York and Texas to Mullin, including the last seven years at Bastrop Cedar Creek, a UIL Class 5A school in the Austin area. Sharkey, a Lampasas native, also coached at the collegiate and high school level in New York and at three other Texas high schools.

With a roster short on experience, Sharkey braced herself for a chal-

lenging start. But she plans on having the Lady Dawgs in their accustomed role of playoff qualifier as the regular season ends.

"We put in a lot of new stuff so things may look chaotic for a little bit," Sharkey said. "But change is a challenge, and challenges help us grow. We hope to make the adjustments and start looking smooth by the time district starts.

"We want to build on the tradition they've already established here and run with it."

Mullin competes in District 8-2A, which requires some explaining since the Lady Dawgs are a Class 1A team seeking to advance to the 1A playoffs. The UIL lumps Class 2A and 1A teams into the same districts to help with travel and scheduling since not all small schools in Texas play volleyball.

District 8-2A includes Class 2A schools Hamilton, Hico and De Leon, and they are seeking to advance to the 2A playoffs. The Class 1A schools in the district – Evant, Gorman, Gustine, Lingleville, Zephyr and Mullin – are seeking 1A playoff berths.

Mullin's returnees include three juniors in setter Brianna Burrus, outside hitter Kaitlyn Moore and middle hitter Abby Spruell. Also returning are sophomores Alexis Coston, a middle hitter, and Nadia Dela Rosa, an outside hitter.

Three newcomers joined the team this season: senior right-side hitters Tatum Forbis and Mikayla Johnson, and sophomore defensive specialist Trinity Page.

"Nadia Dela Rosa is our No. 1 outside hitter. She has a great swing. Kaitlyn Moore is very aggressive and she'll be a great complement

to Nadia. Alexis Coston is a dangerous player. We'll probably move her around. Brianna Burrus has a great set of hands and is a smart floor leader," Sharkey said.

The Lady Dawgs already have played two matches against Brady, plus tournaments at Veribest and Gorman. Mullin is scheduled to begin District 8-2A play at 1 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25, at home against Hico. The Lady Dawgs will play 16 District 8-2A games.

"We have heart-and-hustle kids and you can't teach those things," Sharkey said. "We will be a scrappy team on the floor. When we need to be, we'll be on the ball every chance we get. We're not going to let things fall on the floor.

"We're working at being very aggressive and on the attack. We're going to do good things."

