



Emma Ricker (12) and Jenna Caspers (5) lead the celebration after a Lady Eagle point Tuesday evening in Ellinwood. (photo by Mike Courson)



Left: Sophomore Kennedy Harrington goes up for a block against Wichita Independent. Right: Junior Maddy Ward goes up for one of her team-high 15 kills in Tuesday's triangular. (photo by Mike Courson)

Lady Eagle volleyball squad opens season with one win, one loss

BY MIKE COURSON
 It may have been the first match of the season but there was plenty of room for drama. The Lady Eagle volleyball team had to come from behind to beat Wichita Independent 23-25, 25-18, 25-20 in Tuesday's season-opener at home. Hutch Trinity won the triangular, beating Independent, then downing Ellinwood 25-20, 25-20 in the finale.

The season started with a bang. Junior Maddy Ward hammered down the first point and junior Kaitlyn Pohlman added an ace as Ellinwood crept out to a 4-0 lead. The Lady Eagles struggled with serve receive for much of the night and the Panthers battled back with a two aces for a 6-4 score. Ward answered with a kill and ace of her own to keep the gap at 8-4.

Eventually, the errors proved to be too much in the first set. Too many aces, too many girls in the net, and a wrong server at a pivotal time in the match to give Independent a 22-19 lead.

"To be 100 percent honest, I'm okay with what happened," said Lady Eagle coach Shelly Duvall. "I didn't like it but I'd much rather us get that out of our systems now than later on in the evening or later on in the season. Nothing against them, but we made a ton of errors on our side."

A stuff from Ward and ace from Pohlman gave Ellinwood a late 23-22 lead, but another Panther ace and another Lady Eagle in the net proved to be the difference in the first set.

"The net errors were on our part," Ward said. "Those are stupid little mistakes and we shouldn't do that. We just need to take a step back and play our game because we don't usually do that. I think it was just the first day out and we wanted to get touches."

The Lady Eagles never trailed in the second set. With a 4-4 score, senior Emma Ricker came up with a kill. With junior Jenna Caspers on

serve, freshman Mya Maxwell picked up a couple points at the net as Ellinwood pulled away with a 12-5 lead.

Ward and sophomore Kennedy Harrington picked up points at the net, and Maxwell served up an ace for an 18-11 lead. Ricker went soft at the net for the final point of the set to force a third. Ellinwood played from behind for much of that decisive third set. Ward stopped the bleeding with a stuff to cut the lead to 15-11. Ricker and Harrington added hits, and Ward rode a long serve with help from Caspers and Harrington at the net for a 17-16 lead.

Leading 21-19, Ricker and Maxwell combined for a stuff. Ward came up with three-straight points at the net to finish off the set and Independent 25-20. "My game is at the net, not the back row," said Ward.

"The mental toughness side is something we've been working on in Ellinwood athletics for a very long time," Duvall said. "It's not that we don't have the athletes or the talent, it's whether the thing between our ears is going to interfere with what we're doing. Tonight, they overcame that, which is a good sign."

Ward paced the offense with 13 kills. Ricker added six spikes, and Maxwell and Caspers each had five kills. Maxwell and Caspers each had 14 assists, but Duvall gives credit to Pohlman for setting up the offense.

"Those passes, when we needed them, were there," she said. "The only way we can run our offense is whether or not we have passes to our setters. Our setters stepped it up there at the end, too, but it wouldn't have happened without those passes."

Pohlman had two aces in the win. Caspers led the back row with 10 digs, and Ward added eight digs.

Trinity serve dominates

The Lady Celtics found a hole in Tuesday's finale. Or a few of them. Trinity scored four of its first seven points against Ellinwood via the ace, and six of the team's first 14 points were aces.

"Serve receive is definitely our weak spot right now," Duvall said. "We fell apart in the serve receive. We were passing backwards, we were passing sideways. I have hitters out the wazoo, but we can't do anything until the ball gets in front of the 10-foot line."

Trinity led 14-6 early on and rode that gap to a 25-20 finish.

Ellinwood was more competitive in the second set. After giving up an ace on the second point, the Lady Eagles battled back with an ace from freshman Emily Frakes for a 5-4 lead. Pohlman added a hit for a 6-4 advantage, but another Celtic ace eventually knotted the score at six.

Ellinwood took the lead one final time on a block from Ward at 17-16. Trinity used an ace to pull ahead 22-17, then finished off the Lady Eagles 25-20 to finish the night at 2-0.

Maxwell had five kills at the net. Ricker, Ward, Caspers, and Pohlman each added two spikes. Caspers had seven assists, and Maxwell added four passes. Ricker led the back row with five digs, and Ward and Caspers each had four digs.

The Lady Eagles open the season at 1-1, but it wasn't a bad start for a squad featuring the sophomore Harrington and two freshmen in Frakes and Maxwell.

"For their first night out, they did pretty darn good," Duvall said of her freshmen. "I look to speed up Mya a little on the offensive side of things, and get Emma in that game a little more - she has a good passing style. For their first games out as freshmen, I think they did a pretty good job."

The Lady Eagles traveled to Ellsworth Thursday for a triangular with Sterling and Ellsworth.



2017 Lady Eagle tennis team, from left: Daphne Doll, Taryn Robl, Tara Collins, Katelyn Reh, Wittney Hammeke, Monica Hammeke. (photo courtesy of Coach Briseno)

Six Lady Eagles out for tennis team

BY MIKE COURSON
 Lady Eagle head coach Gentry Briseno will have a small but quality squad on the tennis court in 2017. The former EHS player and second-year coach has four varsity players back from last year, including seniors Tara Collins, who played at state.

"I would really like to see the girls come out of their shell and play like I know they can," Briseno said of the 2017 squad. "We have just enough girls for a varsity team, so that means these girls need to step it up and be ready to compete against some great teams."

Collins teamed up with then-senior Katelyn Robinson to finish sixth at regionals last year. The girls took a 15-14 record into state where they went 0-2.

Taryn Robl, Macy Munson, and Katelyn Reh each return with varsity experience. Robl and Reh

were part of the loaded singles bracket in the Class 3-2-1A regional last fall in Hesston. Robl lost her first match against a player who just missed state qualification, and Reh dropped her play-in match at the tournament.

Munson was part of a doubles team that dropped its first match to the eventual third-place finishers at the regional. That team went on to place ninth at state.

Briseno will have a

couple new players to work with, and those incoming players will step into varsity roles. Briseno is ready to watch the girls grow as the season progresses.

"I am just looking forward to being their coach," she said. "I love getting out with the girls to teach them new techniques and drills. I'm really looking forward to watching them play their hardest and hopefully succeed."

Ellinwood tennis 2017

Aug. 29	@Ellsworth
Aug. 31	@Larned
Sept. 9	@Great Bend
Sept. 12	HOME @Great Bend
Sept. 14	@Larned
Sept. 21	@Greensburg
Sept. 28	@Great Bend (CP)
Oct. 6-7	Regionals
Oct. 13-14	State



The Hoisington Lady Cardinal golfers finished third at their season-opener at Nickerson. (courtesy photo)

HHS linksters open with strong 3rd

BY MIKE GILMORE
NICKERSON - The Hoisington girls' golf team is already better than last year's team that finished third at the Class 3A state meet in 2016.

Last year, the Lady Cardinals finished third in their season-opening tournament at Hutchinson's Crazy Horse course third with a 191. Seniors Sydney Boxberger and Maddie Wilborn rode highs and lows of the day to wind up in a tie for fifth medalist at 46.

In 2016, Boxberger, Wilborn and Delaney Smith were the trio of seniors who boosted the Lady Cards to a third-place state finish at Garden City's Buffalo Dunes in October. They have since graduated, but three remain.

Hadleigh Gardner, Jaci Schremmer and Alexis Rubio are the seniors now. And Trinity Dolezal, whose two round 117 rounded out the Dunes ef-

fort at state, is a junior.

On Tuesday, everybody was a little bit better. Hutchinson Trinity won the meet with a 160 and Andale was second at 165. The Lady Cards, led by eighth-medalist Jaci Schremmer with a 43, were third again, at 185. Buhler was fourth at 225.

Dolezal was 10th with a 44; Gardiner was 13th with a 46; junior

Maleigha Schmidt shot a 52; Rubio carded a 56 and junior newcomer Liza Ward came in at 70.

"We have three returners from last year's third place in state and also three that worked really hard over the summer," noted veteran coach Bruce Cooper. "Dare I say we might be just as good as we were last year."

Hoisington golf 2017

Aug. 29	@Nickerson
Sept. 5	@Medicine Lodge
Sept. 11	@Pratt
Sept. 14	@Larned
Sept. 18	@Russell
Sept. 21	@Nickerson
Sept. 25	HOME
Oct. 2	@Hays TMP
Oct. 3	@Cheney
Oct. 9	Regional TBA
Oct. 17	State @Hays