

Covenant volleyball showing improvement

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

It may have been one small set for the Lady Pioneers, but it was a giant leap for the Covenant Academy volleyball program.

In a matchup with their local rival, the Lady Lions took the opening set Monday at Charlie Dalton Gymnasium before falling in a hard-fought, three-set match against Warren County.

Covenant (3-3) won the first set 25-21 before falling 25-15 and 25-10 to the Lady Pioneers.

"We have come a long way over the past 2-3 years," said Covenant coach Chris Madewell. "I was proud of the way the girls played. The two teams [Covenant also played Coffee County] we faced are probably better than any teams we will play this year."

"I feel like we were competitive in both games. The girls did not back down."

In the team's second matchup Monday night, Covenant lost 25-20 and 25-16 to the Lady Raiders.

The final four sets were a

struggle, but the night started with the Lady Lions roaring to a win.

Covenant was more than up to the task of squaring off against Warren County, a region qualifier in 6A last fall. The Lady Lions were suffocating on defense, flying around to snuff out the Lady Pioneer offense.

Emma Madewell spearheaded the back line, rescuing several possessions with one-arm volleys to keep the ball alive. Sarah Sharpe was one of several Covenant players to hit the deck to save shots.

The defense at the net was anchored by the twin pillars of Arianna Hutchins and Lily Kell, who formed a wall against Lady Pioneer hitters.

The smothering effort wasn't lost on Warren County coach Katie Rogers.

"They were tremendous on defense," said Rogers. "They passed up just about everything we put over the net and those long volleys wore us down. It didn't matter how hard we hit or where the ball was placed, there was always a body there ready to pass."

"I give a lot of credit to coach Madewell. He's done

an amazing job with their program."

Hutchins capped the first set with a pair of aces, allowing Covenant to pull away for the set victory.

"They hustled and played hard," said Madewell. "We were able to get some good hits thanks to good passes from our setters. Playing against these talented teams helps find some of our weak spots. Hopefully we will use that to make us better this season."

Covenant continued its tour of the county Tuesday, traveling to play against Boyd. Results were unavailable at press time. See Friday's paper for more details.



Photo courtesy of Painted Barn Media
Emma Madewell skies over the net to score a point for Covenant Monday. The Lady Lions fell in a close contest against the Lady Pioneers.

Preds, Ellis agree on eight-year deal

NASHVILLE (AP) — Nashville Predators defenseman Ryan Ellis has signed an eight-year deal worth \$50 million that keeps under contract through the 2026-27 season.

The 27-year-old Ellis will earn \$6.25 million annually starting in 2019-20. He has one year remaining on the five-year, \$12.5 million contract he signed on Oct. 5, 2014.

The Predators now have three of their top four defensemen (Ellis, P.K. Subban and Mattias Ekholm) signed through the 2021-22 season and Roman Josi signed through 2019-20.

"Ryan is a huge part of our team on and off the ice and we are happy to have his leadership remain in our locker room for the foreseeable future," Predators general manager David Poile said Tuesday in a statement. "We have talked about wanting to keep the core of our team together, and this is another opportunity to help us do so while continuing to compete for a Stanley Cup. Ryan is entering his prime and is one of the reasons why we feel this team has a chance to win every time we step on the ice."

Ellis scored nine goals



Photo via Predators.com/
John Russell

Ryan Ellis signed an eight-year deal Tuesday to remain with the Nashville Predators.

and set career highs in assists (23) and plus-minus rating (plus-26) in 2017-18 despite playing in only 44 games due to his recovery from offseason knee surgery. He didn't make his season debut until Jan. 2.

Ellis has spent his entire NHL career with the Predators. He has 55 goals and 118 assists in 396 career regular-season games.

He has 22 playoff assists to rank second in Predators history. His 27 career playoff points rank third on the franchise's all-time list.

CORRECTION



In the Aug. 12 *Standard* story titled "WCHS soccer sets roster," Jax Griffith was misidentified in a file photo. We apologize for the error.

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