

Mullin volleyball must overcome its youth

By Mike Lee
Eagle Contributor

With a young and inexperienced volleyball team, the Mullin Lady Dawgs have a lot of work ahead if they want to return to the postseason.

Mullin returns just two players from last year -- senior middle hitter Alexis Coston and sophomore outside hitter Montana Day. All the other players are newcomers to the program, including freshmen Natalie Vega, Kaitlyn Hernandez and Abril Martinez. The team's other newcomer is sophomore Zoe Maas.

"We're very young, obviously, and we're working hard to overcome our youth. We are continuing to work hard on teamwork," said Myranda Moody, the Lady Dawgs' first-year head coach.

"Our teamwork has been tremendous. We're working hard and learning a lot. We're making great progress."

Mullin ended its brief, one-year absence from the playoffs last year by finishing third in its district with a veteran team. Last year's third-place district finish gave the Lady Dawgs their fifth playoff berth in the last six years. It was short-lived, though, as Mullin fell to eventual Region I runner-up Bronte 3-0 in bidistrict.

Coston, a 6-foot force in the middle, and the 5-9 Day have been the expected leaders this season as the lone returning lettermen.

"Alexis motivates everybody, and Montana cheers for everybody. She's a motivator, too. Both Alexis and Montana lift up the younger players and motivate them to be the best they can be," Moody said.

The coach said Vega, a freshman setter, has been "on point" with her setting in the early-season matches. Coston and Day have been strong servers while Maas, Hernandez and Martinez have been capable defenders.

The Lady Dawgs won one of their first six matches as the new players grow into their new roles. Ahead is the District 8-2A schedule, which opens Sept. 14 at Lingleville. Mullin's district home opener is scheduled for 5 p.m. Sept. 17 against Gustine.

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 vol-

leyball teams into the same districts to help with travel and scheduling. District 8-2A includes 2A schools Hico and De Leon, along with 1A schools Evant, Gorman, Gustine, Lingleville, Mullin and Zephyr.

When it comes time for the postseason, the 2A teams have their own playoff bracket and the 1A teams have their own bracket. In 1A, the top three teams advance to the postseason.

Lingleville is the defending 1A dis-

trict champion while Evant was second last year and Mullin was third.

Moody returned to coaching this year after taking off the last four years while having three children. Previously, the Veribest native and Angelo State University graduate coached volleyball and girls' basketball at Fort Stockton from 2012-2015. Her husband, Chris Moody, currently is head girls' basketball coach at Early.



Mullin Lady Bulldogs Kaitlyn Hernandez, Alexis Coston, Montana Day, (front row) Abril Martinez, Zoe Mass, Natalie Vega.