Ronald Bond/The Observer

Members of the Powder Valley volleyball team console one another following the Badgers' loss to St. Paul in the title match Saturday night.

BADGERS

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team's ability to get back to the final. "We lost Belle (Blair) midway through the season, and we had a talk about how we had the same goal and that wasn't going to change anything. (Even after) losing really good seniors last year we knew we could be just as good this year. It was our goal throughout the season (and) from the beginning of the summer to make it back here."

The Badgers had little trouble in the quarterfinal win over Damascus Christian Friday morning, winning 25-16, 25-14, 25-19.

They appeared set to coast to the championship after taking the first two sets from Country Christian later Friday, 25-17, 25-11. The Cougars rallied to take sets 3 and 4, 25-17, 25-23, though, before the Badgers regrouped to take the final set, 15-8, to reach the final.

Josi Krieger, one of two seniors who played for the final time over the weekend, said "it was all fight" for the Badgers to overcome in the final set.

"We knew we deserved to be in the championship game, and we knew that if we didn't get it, our whole entire goal for the season would be gone," she said.

The Badgers started strong in the championship match, going up 7-2 early in the opening set on an ace by Autumn Davis and a Buckaroos' attack error for their biggest lead.

The margin was still 10-6 after a kill by Bingham before St. Paul heated up. The Buckaroos scored the next 12 points, with Wyss netting eight kills in the rally, to take an 18-10 lead.

Bingham said since the teams had met in the final a year earlier, Powder Valley had an idea of what to expect from the hard-hitting Buckaroos, but played timid.

"So we knew exactly what we were going against," she said. "I think we psyched ourselves out a little bit."

Krieger, who had five kills and 11 digs, had a kill to stop the rally, but the Badgers got no closer than seven in the set.

The scoring streak set a pattern for the night, as a run of 14-2 broke the second set open and put the Buckaroos up 22-11, before Wyss ended the set with two more kills.

An 8-0 run early in the third gave the Buckaroos an 11-3 lead. The Badgers showed fight in an effort to get back in the match. Kills by Krieger and Allen cut the margin to 13-9, and another Allen kill made it 15-10.

"We were saying to swing away. We got nothing to lose, so give it our all. It's our last game of the season, it's the seniors' last game ever, so give it everything you have," Allen said of the team's message as it tried to rally.

The Bucks opened up the lead to 24-12 before Davis individually sparked one final rally, with a kill and back-to-back aces to trim the margin to eight before St. Paul finished off the win.

While each player admitted she didn't have her best night Saturday, Allen said the Buckaroos would have been formidable even if the Badgers were on.

"St. Paul is a really good team. They would be tough to beat regardless of how we played," she said.

Davis, who had five kills and five aces, said the Badgers' team chemistry played an important role in its success during the season.

"We came back really strong, and even better than last year, I thought," the senior said. "We bonded really well as a team and played really well all the way around all season."

Krieger agreed that the Badgers had a special link this fall.

"Team wise we bonded way more than we did last year, and I think that's why it's so much more emotional, and not just for the older girls, but the younger ones too," she said.

The team will lose Davis and Krieger to graduation but return everyone else next fall.

"We should be good next year too," Bingham said.

EOU rallies for win at Rocky

Observer staff

Victor Dias rushed for two touchdowns, including the eventual game-winning score with 8:10 to play, and the Eastern Oregon football team rallied in the fourth quarter for a 27-17 road win over Rocky Mountain College Saturday in Frontier Conference play in Billings, Montana.

"Great team win on a long road trip in the Frontier Conference," EOU head coach Tim Camp said.

Eastern trailed 17-16 entering the fourth quarter, but Dias' second 1-yard scoring run of the day and an ensuing 2-point conversion put EOU up 24-17. The Mountaineers iced the game a few minutes later when Jaiden Machuca hit a season-best 36-yard field goal.

The Mountaineers, led by 71 yards rushing from Kai Quinn and 67 yards from Dias, turned in one of their more effective running efforts of the season as they recorded 150 yards on the ground. Quinn, who was also 13-for-28 passing for 126 yards, had a 1-yard rushing touchdown that gave EOU a 16-10 lead with 4:52 to play in the third quarter.

RMC answered with a 22-yard Kamden Brown to Lucas Overton touchdown pass to take the one-point edge into the fourth quarter, where EOU rallied for its third win of the season, and second win when trailing in the fourth quarter.

Eastern also posted a strong effort on the defensive end by forcing three turnovers — including two interceptions nabbed by Haziel Ledezma and a fumble recovery by Chase Van Wyck.

Brown passed for 257 yards and two touchdowns for Rocky, but also threw the two picks to Ledezma.

EOU (3-7 overall, 3-6 Frontier) finishes the regular season Saturday when it hosts Carroll College and goes for a fifth straight win over the Fighting Saints.

Women split at L-C State Classic

Observer staff

The No. 8 Eastern Oregon women's basketball team split a pair of contests at the L-C State Classic over the weekend in Lewiston, Idaho, defeating Montana Western Friday, 65-62, but falling to host Lewis-Clark State College Saturday, 65-57.

Eastern led by 15 points in the first quarter of Friday's game against Montana Western, and was still up by 15 points in the fourth quarter before the Bulldogs rallied late. The Bulldogs got as close as 63-62 with less than a minute to play on a pair of Paige Holmes free throws but missed their chance at the tie on the final possession.

The Mountaineers used an early 19-2 run to build the double-digit first-quarter lead. Five different players hit a 3-pointer during the opening run, with Whitney Meier's trey making it 19-4 in the first quarter.

Beverly Slater and Emma Logan both posted double-doubles in the win for EOU. Slater had 15 points and 11 rebounds, while Logan added 12 points and 12 boards. Rachel Fielder also reached double figures in scoring, putting in 13 points. EOU started the game 5-for-6 from 3-point range, and shot 40% overall.

On Saturday, it was Eastern trying to play the role of comeback kids, but their rally from down as much as 19 points in the contest proved to be too much to overcome. The closest EOU came in the fourth quarter was 57-51, when a Taylor Stricklin 3-pointer and an Andi Warn basket capped a 9-0 run with 3:20 to play.

Fielder had 14 points and 10 boards to lead EOU. Slater just missed a second straight double-double, finishing with 11 points and nine rebounds, and Warn added seven points.

The Mountaineers (3-2 overall) travel to Boston to face Fisher (Massachusetts) on Saturday.

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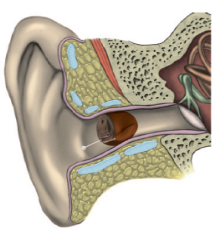

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