

Sports & Recreation

Crater shoots down volleyballers

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

The Sandy High girls volleyball team fell victim to some early season-type errors which allowed the Crater Comets to pull off a major upset in the first round of the state playoffs.

The final score was 16-14, 15-12 in favor of the Comets but it took some late-game rallies from the Pioneers to bring the score that close.

For Sandy, the loss marked the end of the season. Crater will now meet Rex Putnam in the quarterfinals at Lewis and Clark College.

Coach Ron Grantz was at a loss in trying to explain the team's defeat. There are upsets in every sport, he said, Sandy's just came at a very unfortunate time.

"I don't think we were nervous," Grantz added. "We may have taken them too lightly."

"I don't believe we were looking past Crater, but we expected to win," he said. "Crater was a pretty good team; they may have forced a few of our errors."

EARLY LEAD

Sandy made quite a few errors, but at least in the beginning of the match Crater made more. To the delight of the crowd in the Sandy gym, Sandy jumped out to a 4-1 lead on the strength of some illegal Crater hits and an Esme Junsen spike.

But Crater fought back and it was Sandy errors that opened the door for the Comets' comeback.

Michele Cleland missed a pair of spikes, Cherie Elliott was caught with her hand in the net and suddenly Crater was back in the game at 6-6.

The teams then went through five sideouts, before Jensen went up, faked a spike and tipped the ball over the outstretched hands of two Comets. When Crater's Teresa Wineman failed to get the ball over the net on the next play, Sandy extended its lead to 8-6.

But it turned out to be the final lead of the game for the Pioneers. Crater started making some big plays of its own and when combined with the Sandy mistakes, it was enough to turn the tide in favor of the Comets.

Debbie Tally and Lynda Gay hit spikes to even the score, then Tally smashed a serve off Jensen's hands to give Crater the lead. Three straight Pioneer blunders extended the Comets' lead to 12-8.

The Pioneers didn't give up, however. After five sideouts, they closed the gap 12-10 when Crater's Mary Houlett let the ball hit the floor thinking a teammate had it, and Joy Czmański hit a spike out of bounds.

The teams traded points and then Crater scored an important counter on a controversial call by an official. A Crater girl tipped the ball over the net and Cherie Elliott made a move toward the ball to save it. She realized that it would land out and tried to pull her hands away, but the official ruled that the ball grazed her hands.

Elliott's vehement protest failed to reverse the decision and Crater took a commanding 14-11 lead. But the Pioneers made one more run at the Comets before succumbing.

A Crater girl was caught over the line; Lynda Gay's spike hit the net and Cleland hit a kill shot to even the score at 14-14. But Jeanne Duff hit the next serve into the net to give the ball back to the Comets.

Then Cleland missed a spike and Julie Colt was called for an illegal set and Crater found itself one game ahead of the heavily favored Pioneers.

SANDY ERRORS

The second game was much the same. Sandy jumped out to a 3-0 lead which brought the crowd to life, but then reverted back to the style of play which gave away the first game.

"We were in the net more in the Crater match than we have been all season."

"We must have had four or five net calls Saturday," he added. "We haven't been caught in the net four times all season."

Whatever the reason, the Pioneers were caught with their hands in the cookie jar several times against Crater, and it was usually at an inopportune moment.

After taking an early lead in the second game, Jensen was whistled for an illegal hit and Cleland missed a spike before Elliott was called for reaching over the net. The latter call tied the score at 3-3.

Crater was gathering momentum which in volleyball is two-thirds of the game. After falling behind 3-0, the Comets rattled off 13 of the next 14 points. During that string, only one Crater point was directly scored by a Comet player, that on a spike by Gay.

A collection of errant spikes, illegal hits and mental errors plagued the Pioneers, a marked contrast from the type of play they used to defeat Estacada and Dallas to get into the playoffs.

"We passed horribly up to our setters," Grantz said. "If you're an offensive team and pass the ball poorly, you're going to get beat."

As a result the setters were forced to put the ball up too far from the net. Instead of tipping the ball, the spikers went ahead and tried to smoke it past the Comets. They apparently forgot the net was there.

But once again, the Pioneers showed their class by coming back for a final rally. Trailing 13-4, they put

together a string of four straight points. Colt made a nice save and Gay hit a spike out of bounds; Cleland hammered a spike off Kris Parent; Gay hit another shot out and Cleland tipped the ball over a pair of Comets to bring Sandy close.

Tally then hit a standing spike for Crater to bring the Comets to within one point of victory at 14-8, and it became sudden death for the Pioneers. They scratched out four more points on two Cherie Elliott spikes, a Julie Colt ace and a net call before Crater put the final point on the board.

The loss put an end to one of the most successful seasons in Sandy volleyball history. The Pioneers finished with a 9-1 league record — their best ever. They also finished first in the league, beat perennial power Estacada twice and placed four starters on the All-Star team — all for the first time.

The freshman and junior varsity teams both finished the season with 9-1 league records for a combined program record.

Unfortunately it will be that one hour on Saturday afternoon that most people will remember.

"They played better than we did," Grantz said. "They deserved to win — they were a better team."

"Well, let's just say that they played better than we did on Saturday."

A tough start

People coming in from the parking lot for the state volleyball playoff between Sandy and Crater were probably surprised to see a pair of taxis outside of the Sandy gym on Saturday.

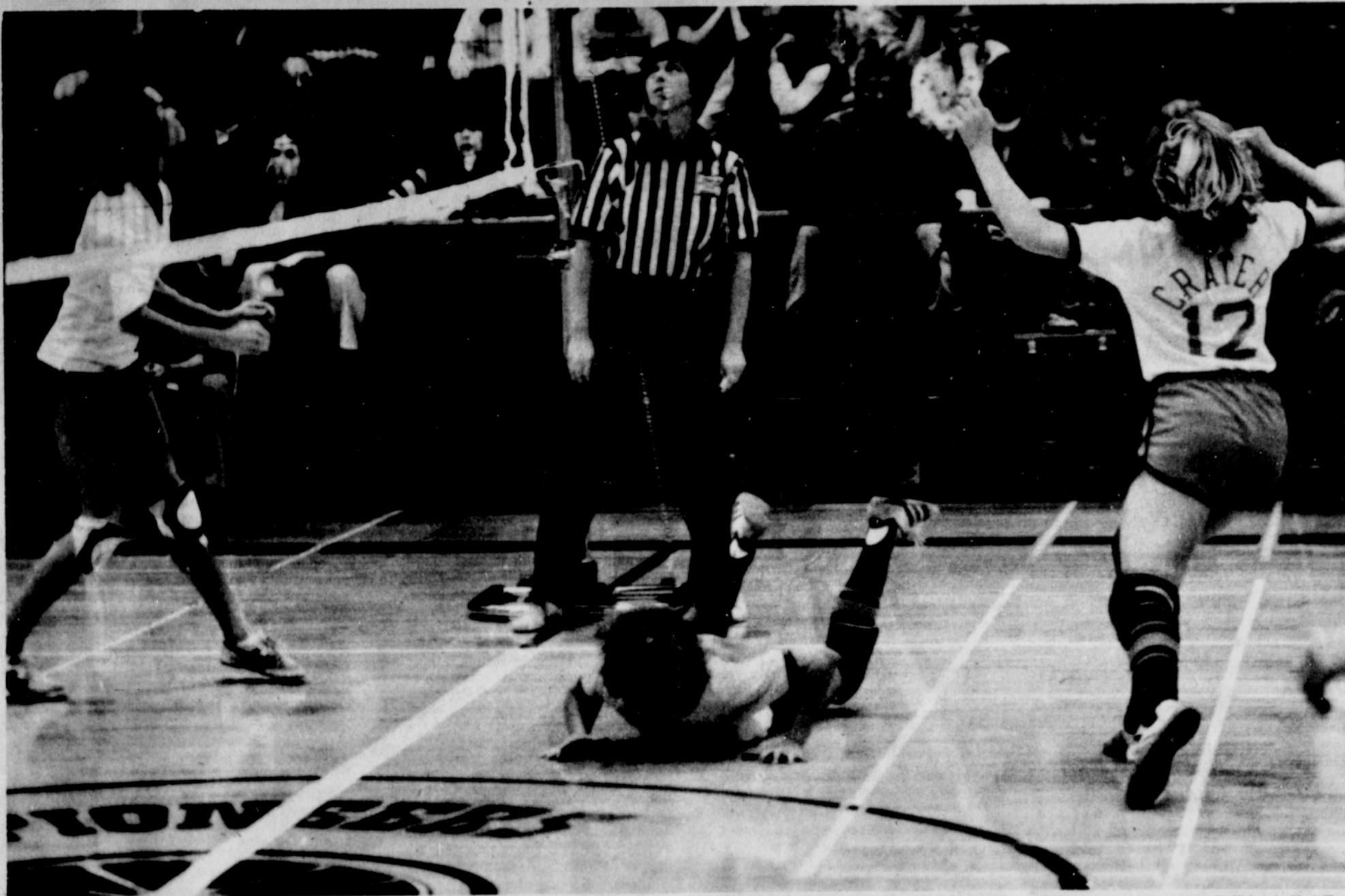
It looked for a while like the Pioneers were up against a team of prima donnas.

But there was a reason for the first class travel methods of the Crater Comets. While they were in their motel in Portland, someone stole the starter out of their school van.

Since Saturday was a semi-official holiday, the team couldn't find a mechanic to fix the van. So what else, but taxis.

Crater arrived late for the game, delaying the start for a half-hour, and then soundly defeated the favored Pioneers 16-14, 15-12.

Someone should have stolen the starters out of the taxis.



Cherie Elliott (left) and two Crater girls search for the ball.

Staff photo by Mark Floyd

Vikings advance in grid playoffs

The team that eliminated the Sandy High football team from the Class AAA playoffs is still alive in the tournament — but just barely.

Forest Grove topped the Pioneers 31-18 to earn the top Coast-Valley League berth in the state playoffs, but the Vikings needed a little extra to get past Crescent Valley in the first round on Saturday.

Trailing 14-9, the Vikings had a fourth-and-two situation at the Crescent Valley 11-yard line with only two minutes remaining in the game.

Quarterback Ron Rasmus rolled out on the option and spotted tight end Dave Keller alone in the end zone. Rasmus flipped a little pass to Keller and that was the margin Forest Grove needed to knock off the Raiders.

Crescent Valley outgained the Vikings 297-200 in total yards but it wasn't enough to knock off the Vikings who improved their record to 10-0. Forest Grove will meet Clackamas, 9-1, in the quarterfinals at Civic Stadium this Friday at 8 p.m.

The Cavaliers were also involved in a squeaker, getting by Pendleton 21-20 last Friday at Civic Stadium.

Pendleton dominated the game and the statistics, but lost in the most important column — points scored.

The Buckaroos outgained Clackamas 304-160 on a night with 20-degree temperatures and 25-mile-an-hour winds. In the end it was two crucial pass interceptions which did Pendleton in.

Rick Crivellone picked off a screen pass to set up one score and Dick Heriza picked off another Buckaroo pass with six minutes left in the game. Pendleton had driven down to the Clackamas 12-yard line before the crucial interception.

The Cavaliers then turned around and marched 80 yards for the deciding

touchdown, an eight-yard pass from Gordy Wellborn to Mark Rowland.

Elsewhere around the state, Valley League champion Corvallis picked up nearly 400 yards on offense to easily knock off Benson 40-7. The top-ranked Spartans scored on three runs of 45 yards or longer in improving their record to 10-0.

Corvallis will now meet the Dallas Dragons (9-1) at Parker Stadium in Corvallis Friday. Dallas' only loss of the season was at the hands of Forest Grove 14-7.

Dallas got into the quarterfinals by rallying to defeat La Grande 14-13 on a brisk night in the Tigers' stadium at La Grande.

The Dragons' all-league quarterback Rick Caudillo was the catalyst in the game as he scored the tying touchdown on a one-yard run, kicked the go-ahead extra point, and killed the final La Grande threat with an interception on the Dallas 40.

Roseburg gained the quarterfinals by beating Aloha 14-3 in Beaverton last Friday. Roseburg quarterback Neil Fuller completed only two passes in three attempts, but they both went for touchdowns.

The Indians will meet the Generals of Grant High School who survived a scare from Marshfield before subduing the Pirates Friday 13-6.

Tailback Kevin MacMillian led the Generals with two touchdowns and 215 yards rushing. He scored on a 57-yard run in the first quarter and bowled over from 13 yards out in the final period for the game-winning touchdown.

Churchill used some aggressive defense to roll over the Appolos of Sunset 22-6. After an inconsistent performance by the offensive unit, the Lancer defense stiffened up and came away with a few big plays to gain the

quarterfinals.

Mike Sodaro recovered a Sunset fumble on the Apollo 12-yard line to set up one score, then a short time later a host of Lancers gobbled up Sunset's Jack Regan behind the goal line for a safety.

Churchill must now face the always tough Black Tornado of Medford in the quarterfinals. Medford and Churchill battled to a 7-7 tie in the finals of last year's playoffs.

Medford earned a rematch with the Lancers by making some big defensive plays, in a 21-13 win over Barlow. With the score knotted at 7-7, Medford's Bruce Corson blocked a Barlow punt which was pounced on by teammate Jeff Graves in the end zone.

After Barlow had drawn to within one point, Paul Chitwood sealed the game for the Black Tornado with an interception which he returned 19 yards for a touchdown.

Barlow had outgained Medford in the game, 210-186 yards.

CLASS AAA first round

Forest Grove 15, Crescent Valley 14
Dallas 14, La Grande 13
Grant 13, Marshfield 6
Churchill 22, Sunset 6
Corvallis 40, Benson 7
Medford 21, Barlow 13
Clackamas 21, Pendleton 20
Roseburg 14, Aloha 3

QUARTERFINAL SCHEDULE

Dallas (9-1) vs. Corvallis (10-0) at Parker Stadium, Corvallis, Friday, 8 p.m.
Medford, (10-0) vs. Churchill (10-0) at Autzen Stadium, Eugene, Friday, 8 p.m.
Clackamas (9-1) vs. Forest Grove (10-0), site and time undetermined
Grant (9-1) at Roseburg (8-2), Friday, 8 p.m.



Julie Colt and Michele Cleland block a spike.

Staff photo by Mark Floyd