

N. Douglas girls score fifth trip to quarterfinals

By Zach Silva
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The Warriors are going back to Redmond. For the fifth season in a row, the North Douglas volleyball team has advanced to the 1A state quarterfinals.

"I'm just excited. I'm really happy for the girls. I'm happy for our seniors that they get to finish their volleyball career on the state tournament floor," said North Douglas head coach Anne Campbell. "We've got freshmen that have been contributing all season and so they can see that hard work can get them to the state tournament and it kind of sets the tone for them coming back. Now they're going to want to go to the state tournament every year. So I'm excited that we won."

North Douglas had a pair of home playoff wins last week defeating 18th ranked Rogue Valley Adventist Academy in straight sets (25-6, 25-14, 25-14) on Wednesday and 16th ranked Adrian in four sets (25-15, 23-25, 25-19, 25-20) on Saturday afternoon.

In Wednesday's game, it was all Warriors from the start as they were untouched in the first set against Rouge Valley. The visiting Red Tail Hawks strug-

gled on their serve receive and when they did manage to get it over the net, it did not turn into a rally but rather an exhibition in North Douglas hitting.

"We've just got to overpower them and outplay them and outwork and out hustle and outlast. That's what we do," said Campbell.

Leading the way for North Douglas was Arianna Helgren with 11 kills to go with 11 digs. Abby Whipple had eight kills, seven digs and 20 assists for the Warriors.

"I told (the team), after that first set, you know, that's a team, playoff jitters, long bus ride or whatever. That's not the team that made it this far so you've got to prepare for that team," said Campbell. "And then in the second they played a little more competitively and we started off right away with like four or five hitting errors which, I told them, that doesn't work for us."

Aided by North Douglas' sloppy start to the set, Rogue Valley was able to hang around. The set swung with the serving of North Douglas' freshman Samantha MacDowell. The Red Hawks were again out of rhythm and the Warriors capitalized with an 11-3 run.

Rogue Valley hung around in

the third set and even took an 11-9 advantage before the Warriors rallied. It was, again, jump started with their serve but this time from Rilie-Jo Olds who helped put together an 8-0 run. Jo-Olds finished the game with 12 aces and five kills.

"I think it was a very good performance. I think there is more that we can work on and lots more kills that we can probably get but I feel like we played a very good game," said Jo-Olds. "I think energy and keeping our composure is a big thing for us and not letting any points get to us. If they get a point, we get the next point."

The win set the team up for a matchup against Adrian in the second round of the playoffs. In the first game of the season, the Warriors defeated the Antelopes at the 1A Preview Tournament.

From the start Adrian was competitive but the Warriors were too dominant across the board with big performances from Helgren, Whipple and Nicki Derrick. Helgren had 22 kills and 31 digs, Whipple recorded a triple-double with 24 digs, 24 assists and 14 kills while Derrick added 29 assists, 23 digs and seven aces.

After North Douglas took the first set, Adrian answered in the

second with a late-rally. The Warriors had a 19-14 lead that was followed with an 11-4 run by the visiting side to even the match at one set apiece.

"We got into a couple times where we kind of got into a little bit of tentative play and kind of let's see what they do on their side and I told them, that's not our game. We don't win those games. We have to play our aggressive ball," said Campbell.

In the third set, the Warriors again led 19-14 but this time were able to take care of business and close out the set. The fourth set was up for grabs throughout with neither team able to take control.

"I felt like the last set was low energy on both sides," said Campbell. "It was like 15-15 and it was like, who's going to play hard for 10 points? Because that's what it's going to take because I didn't want to go five (sets). I did not want to play five."

Campbell got her wish as her team was able to claw their way to a win that was finished, fittingly, with a Helgren kill to seal the game and send the team back to Redmond for the fifth year in a row.

"Before the game we went out there and we were just like, we need to jump on them. Because our biggest strength is being able to jump on teams and just hit aggressively," said Helgren. "So we knew in order to win, all of our hitters had to pound the ball. And I felt like we really ef-



North Douglas' Arianna Helgren tips the ball over the net against Adrian on Saturday.

fectively did that today."

Going into the quarterfinals, the Warriors feel that this year the championship is up in the air. The last four seasons the title has belonged to Country Christian but they were eliminated in the second round on Saturday. Additionally, three teams ranked higher than eight (Perrydale ranked 9th, Joseph 10th and Crosshill Christian 11th) have made their way to the final location.

"I'm so excited. It's senior year and we get to play in the state tournament. What ever happens there happens but I think we can go all the way," said Whipple. "It's so exciting."

In a quarterfinal match taking place at 8 a.m. on Friday, North

Douglas is facing a familiar foe in fifth ranked Days Creek. The teams have met four times this season with the Warriors winning both league matches and the Wolves taking both tournament matches. Days Creek leads the series in sets won 10-8.

Regardless of matchup, North Douglas' Campbell believes that the team's best volleyball is yet to come.

"We always talk about peaking in November," she said. "So I want to have the ultimate volleyball experience. I want everyone to have their best games and just walk away from the state tournament ending our season on a proud and happy note."

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Volleyball from B1

the quarterfinals to a three seed. This year, they enter as the three seed.

"None of us had ever been to the tournament before and it's way different than your regular tournament because it's Forest

Grove and it's huge. And it's really tall and the lights are huge and everything is different," said Herbert. "Having that (experience) we know what to expect... and it feels a lot better knowing that."

Cottage Grove will take on sixth-ranked Tillamook on Friday at 3:15. The game can be streamed from OSAA's website.

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