

Gilpin Volleyball advances to regionals



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

An exceptional season

Above, left; The entire Gilpin Volleyball team. Above, right; Jiselle Osteboe practices setting during warmups. Bottom, left; Camryn Ganz led the team in kills this year. Middle, left; Senior Abby Smith goes low for a dig in the Eagles' match against Strasburg.

Dave Gibson Strasburg

There are twelve regions in Colorado 2A volleyball. The three best teams during the regular season in each region advance. After a highly successful year with a 17-6 overall record that included nine wins and merely two losses in league play, the Gilpin Eagles were one of those teams. It is the first time in eleven years that their volleyball team was invited to play in the postseason.

Arriving in Strasburg, Saturday, November 5, the Eagles liked their chances in their match against Plateau Valley. Perhaps a little tight in the first game, the girls lost 25-22. Serving as a wakeup call, in the second game, the Eagles reversed the score and result for a 25-22 victory. With their offense clicking, they took the third game convincingly by a score of 25-17. The Plateau Valley Cowboys weren't ready to roll over just yet and handed the Eagles a 25-19 loss.

The teams were tied at two games apiece. Whoever would win the best-of-five series would have to earn it. Showing the grit and determination that defined them all year, the girls prevailed 15-13. Things weren't going to get any easier in their next match against #5 ranked Strasburg Indians. If they could somehow win that match, they would advance to the State Championships.

Strasburg is a powerhouse in 2A volleyball and has won the State Championship twice. Gilpin Volleyball Coach Topher Rouse coached Strasburg's team with their present coach Larry Deffenbaugh for 11 years before

moving on to Gilpin County. Coach Rouse and Coach Deffenbaugh are best friends. Rouse says, "I learned a lot about coaching volleyball from him." Unsurprisingly, their coaching styles and strategies are similar.

Against a quality opponent steeped with hitters and a good setter, the Eagles dropped the first game 25-13. More focused and communicating better in the second game, Gilpin made a match of it, but fell by a score of 25-22. Down by two games, one more loss and they'd be eliminated. Saving their best for last, they struck the ball hard, putting the Indians on their heels. Tied at 20-20, the girls battled valiantly, but in the end, it wasn't quite enough. Final score: Strasburg 25, Gilpin 23.

Congratulations to the lady Eagles on an incredible volleyball season! Team leaders during the regular season were: Camryn Ganz (senior) 189 kills and 30 serving aces, Tommie DiMauro (senior) 254 assists, Abby Smith (senior) 529 digs, and Jiselle Osteboe (sophomore) with 35 blocks. Skyley Ramsey (senior) was a close second in kills and Abby Smith was one of the best at her position in the state.

A disappointed, but happy to have been part of such a special team, Coach Topher Rouse said after their last match, "In the past few years, we've been just out of the top 36 to go to regionals, but this year we were the 20th seed so we didn't just barely make it. I am very proud of how the girls played this year. Every girl on the court and on the bench contributed to the success of this team this season."