Clarenceville spikers fall

By DOUG FUNKE

MOUNT CLEMENS — There was really no need for most of the Trojans of Clarenceville to cry after their disappointing loss to Saginaw Eisenhower Saturday here in the Class B state volleyball championship game.

Even though the final score showed Eisenhower a 16-14 and 15-9 winner, the Trojans showed they had the character of champions by the way they tried to come back from big deficits during both games.

Eisenhower, runner-up to Battle Creek Pennfield in last year's final, rolled up a 14-8 lead on the Trojans during the first game. The Commanders had four different chances to win the game, but Clarenceville would not quit.

Cindi Pellegrin served three points, Angie Coppola served another, then Elina Haikio reeled off two to tie the score at 14.

Eisenhower then blasted a spike into the Trojans' court that was not returned to make it 15-14 and a hand-push technical violation by Chris Stellberger gave the Commanders the winning point.

THE TROJANS fell well behind in the second game, too, 9-2 at one point. Again, the girls regrouped and slowly but surely cut the gap a couple of points at a time.

Stellberger spiked several points and Haikio accounted for a couple with effective, unreturnable blocks at the net.

Clarenceville pulled within one, 10-9, but failed to score after that.

The Trojans looked like two different teams against Eisenhower.

When things were going poorly, the Trojans appeared to be confused and seemed to lack direction. They were on the defensive too much and couldn't mount a strong attack at the net.

When Clarenceville did get things together, it was tough.

"At the end, we had nice-placed shots," said Tom Teeters, coach of the Trojans. "That was the way we were going to have to beat them. We were not going to overpower them."

TEETERS SAID that he never expected his team to advance as far as it did in the tournament. Even though the Trojans won the Metro West Conference title with a 6-0 record, the league is certainly not known for quality of competition.

Then, too, Clarenceville didn't really stand out in any of the tournaments or invitationals in which it participated this winter.

"We were not playing strong all year until the districts," said Teeters. "Still, it (losing in state finals) is an emotional letdown. The players really improved."

THE TROJANS qualified for the finals by whipping Troy in a semifinal 15-9 and 15-5. Clarenceville led almost all the way in both of those games.

Troy coach Mary Haezebrouck, who guided the Colts to a 20-5 season record, said her team played one of its worst matches of the year against Clarenceville.

"We've come across tougher team. There was no excuse for us not to win other than attitude. They were scared," said Haezebrouck. "We've never had so many double-hits or bad serves. There's no excuse for us other than nerves."

Coppola broke a 7-7 tie in the first game by serving two points, Haikio followed by serving three and Pellegrin ended the game by serving three points.

Troy continued to be troubled by technical mistakes and poor bumping during the second game.

Cherryl Ranta served the Trojans to a 4-1 lead, Pellegrin to 7-1 and the outcome soon became apparent.

Teeters said that serving and blocking were the keys to victory over the Colts.

"Serving was very sharp — we didn't miss a single serve," said Teeters. "Our blocking and serving was much more consistent than theirs. Haikio and Stellberger had four blocks each for points.

"The defense was strong. Sheila (Julien) was tough and Angie (Coppola) had some good saves," Teeters added.

Chris Stellberger watches Cindi Pellegrin go for a bump. (Staff photos by Gary Caskey)

HHS cager is all-WSL

Plymouth Canton senior forward Dave Visser tops this year's All-Western Six League basketball squad selected recently by the coaches.

He is joined on the first team by Waterford Mott's Tom Schaefer, Brian Burgess of Farmington Harrison and Brian Kersten of Livonia Churchill. All four players are seniors.

The lone junior picked was Northville center Dave Ward.

Canton's Scott Adler and Brad Westin head the second team along with Keith Hart and Dave Miller of Mott. Also selected was Walled Lake Western's Scott Parrish. Hart is the lone junior.

Gaining honorable mention were Sean Houle of Canton, Mike Wagner of Northville, Mike Cleary of Harrison and Mike Xenos of Western.

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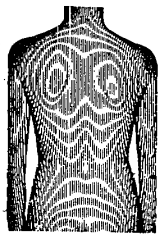

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