

Spartans thrash, shock rival Chargers

By BRAD EXONS
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Wednesday's girls volleyball result was semi-surprising. But the way Livonia Stevenson dismantled host Livonia Churchill, 15-5, 15-3, was almost shocking.

Only five days earlier, Churchill defeated six straight opponents, including Stevenson, 15-11, 15-8, to win the Wayne Invitational.

"We came to play, we were hitting and blocking," Stevenson coach Kelly Graham said. "We only missed three serves. We were ready today and we didn't back down."

Stevenson is 15-6-4 overall, but more importantly 2-0 in the Western Lakes Activities Association.

Churchill dropped to 15-4 and

VOLLEYBALL

1-1. The last three years we've lost our second conference match to Churchill and it kind of put us in the dumpster, too, as far as the city championship," Graham said. "It helped playing them last Saturday as far as figuring out what to do."

Serve reception has been Stevenson's Achilles heel during the early stages of the season, but when Graham juggled her lineup, moving Dana White and Alicia Davis into primary receiving spots, things began to click.

And getting solid play from 6-foot-1 middle blocker Katie Drews (seven kills and four solo blocks), along with steady setting from 5-8 senior Kelley Hutchins, didn't hurt the Spar-

tans' cause either.

They never gave Churchill any room for error.

Drews also unloaded some booming serves, finishing with three aces.

"Katie has been playing like that since the start of the season," Graham said. "Her experience has helped her. She's a smart player."

"Kelly's game boils down to accuracy. She's played a lot of volleyball and knows what to do. She's a good player."

The Spartans, who jumped out to a 9-2 first-game advantage, were never seriously threatened. They also rolled in the second game.

Other contributions by the Spartans came from junior Ashley Dottore, who had 10 digs and two kills; Kristine Matheson, seven digs and an ace; Abbey Schrader, six digs, one kill, one

block and an ace; Abbey Larson, two kills and a block; and Ashley Jannulis, one kill.

Churchill had only nine total kills, four by junior Sheila Gillies, and one ace.

"We didn't come to play and I don't understand why," Churchill coach Mike Hughes said. "It's a bad loss considering how bad we played. I don't know if we can beat anybody on this league playing like that. I just can't find any positives."

Churchill also lost the mandatory third game, 15-13.

"In three games did not block a ball or play defense," Hughes said. "Stevenson played decently and I'd like to give them credit."

"But for us it comes down to attitude, desire and skills. We lacked in all areas. It was just poor technique. We didn't hustle and we didn't serve. We had a hard time passing."

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Following the Hartland Invitational Saturday, Farmington had another big test Monday when it competes against Northville-Nov, the top-ranked team in the state.

"It's exciting because I don't think we've reached what we're potentially capable of," Dwyer said. "If we stay injury free and quit getting sick, we're going to be a pretty good team this year."

In the Salem meet, Seymour won the vault and beam competitions and tied with Keesling for first place on bars. Salem's April Aquino was best in floor exercises.

Seymour had the top all-around score (36.95) followed by Keesling, Salem's Bethany Bartlett and Melissa Drake, Houchins and Aquino.

"Clara almost had a 37 all-around; she did a heckuva job that night," Dwyer said. "She was just on in every event."

"She looked real strong. Then, you have Chelsea, who is so consistent. She's capable of hitting 9s every meet on every event."

"Two girls who are starting to turn it on are Dayna Warheit and Lindsay Smith. They're starting to score in the mid to high 8s."

"I knew they had potential at the beginning, and they're starting to polish their routines and show what they can do."

Despite being a little rusty

after being away from competition for a month and a half, Houchins also had a good meet, according to Dwyer.

"It takes a little while to get everything back," he said. "We're taking it slow and, by the end of the season, she'll be turning a few heads."

"She's putting more pressure on herself than what I expect of her right now. She'll come around; she's a pretty tough little girl."

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Jan. 15 at Plymouth Salem

Vault: 1. Clara Seymour (F), 9.15; 2. Bethany Bartlett (S), 9.0; 3. Sarah Houchins (F), 8.9; 4. Chelsea Keesling (F), 8.85; 5. Dayna Warheit (F), 8.40; 6. Melissa Drake (S), 8.30.

Bars: 1. (tie) Chelsea Keesling (F) and Clara Seymour (F), 9.20; 2. Melissa Drake (S), 9.05; 3. Bethany Bartlett (S), 9.00; 4. Sarah Houchins (F), 8.85; 5. Nicole White (F), 8.2; 6. April Aquino (S), 8.15.

Beam: 1. Clara Seymour (F), 9.35; 2. Melissa Drake (S), 9.3; 3. Lindsay Smith (F), 9.10; 4. Chelsea Keesling (F), 9.05; 5. April Aquino (F), 8.95; 6. Sarah Houchins (F), 8.60.

Floor: 1. April Aquino (F), 9.30; 2. Clara Seymour (F), 9.25; 3. Melissa Drake (S), 9.15; 4. Chelsea Keesling (F), 9.0; 5. Sarah Houchins (F), 8.85; 6. Dayna Warheit (F), 8.65.

All-around: 1. Clara Seymour (F), 36.95; 2. Chelsea Keesling (F), 36.10; 3. Bethany Bartlett (S), 35.90; 4. Melissa Drake (S), 35.80; 5. Sarah Houchins (F), 35.00; 6. April Aquino (F), 34.65.

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ing. "It was a good wakeup call, so we understand, in our conference, we can't just play good volleyball, do a few things right and expect to win. We have to put it all together."

Perrin credited Calanchi for doing a good job of scouting the Falcons and putting together a nice game plan.

Calanchi had her two best servers sending the ball over the net at opportune times in the Farmington rotation, according to Perrin.

"It took us a while to figure the right adjustment," he said. "They were serving well, and we weren't receiving well. We weren't even returning their serves. They placed the ball extremely well."

"They played really tough. I was impressed how tough they played. We had a height advantage over them, and that's what probably wore them down in the third game."

"When they won a game at the tournament, it was more us not coming to play. In this (second) game, they outplayed us. It was not us having a letdown as much as them stepping up their play."

In the third game, the intensity level was high and players on both sides were extremely focused, Perrin added.

"We made an adjustment in our serve receive for their two servers and took away the thing that was hurting us most," he said.

"They were short-serving us and made us adjust to limit that from having quite the effect it was having."

"Once we changed that, they changed the way they were serving, and we defended in a way we were more comfortable with."

Lyndey Howard was 17-of-20 hitting with six kills, nine blocks and 10 digs to lead the Falcons, who are 1-1 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 10-8-3 overall.

Julie Kimmel was Farmington's top server at 16-of-19 with five aces. She was 14-of-17 as an attacker with five kills, and she also had four digs.

Randin Brown had 19 kill assists as the setter in addition to four blocks and six service points (one ace).

"We had a strategy against their side, and we met our goal of hitting around their blocks,"

Calanchi said. "But they do a great job of covering for each other, and that helped them pull out the win in the third game."

North's Amy Berke was 7-of-9 hitting with three kills, Elina Pilmits 14-of-19 with three kills, Meghan Callahan 14-of-17 with six kills and Nicole LeClerc 7-of-10 with two kills.

Christine Grasinaki was 11-of-11 serving with four aces and Berke 13-of-14 with two aces for the Raiders, who are 1-1 in the WLAA and 2-7-3 overall.

(Grasinaki) came in when we were down in the second game," Calanchi said. "She put four or

five serves just over the net and

racked up a handful of points.

"She caught them off guard and forced them to make adjustments. She was the turning point for us."

North's Melissa Traczyk had four tough blocks and two stuff blocks. With two players out for medical reasons, Nicole Moundros did well playing in the back row, according to Calanchi.

Hawks defeat Rockets

Even with three starters out, Westland John Glenn nearly pulled out its first Western Lakes Activities Association girls

volleyball win of the season.

On Wednesday, visiting Farmington Harrison outlasted the Rockets, 12-16, 15-3, 18-16.

"We served consistent throughout, but we stopped attacking at the end," Glenn first-year coach Jennifer Smith said.

Glenn was missing one player to injury, and two others were suspended for disciplinary reasons.

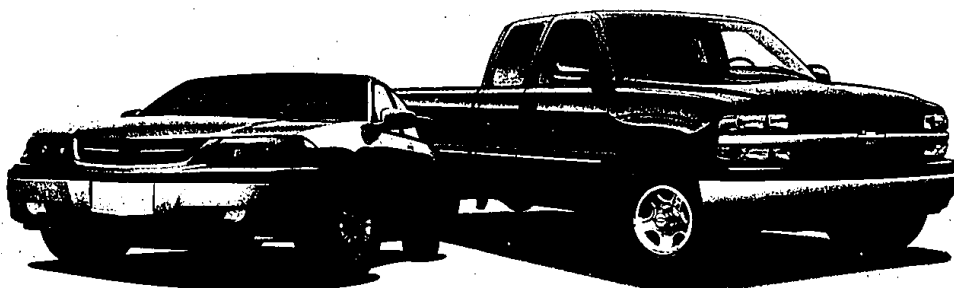
Kathleen Knutson led the Glenn offensive attack with 12 kills and two solo blocks. Outside hitter Lacey Catarino added seven kills and 16 digs.

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reuniting with them again at the state finals (Thanksgiving weekend at the Pontiac Silverdome)."

Lee has not ruled out coaching in some capacity next fall, most likely at a school closer in proximity to his home.

"I'll do something football related next year, whether it's coaching or scouting for somebody," he said. "Football is part of my family."

As far as Lee's successor is concerned, Freeman said he will sit down with Willenborg on Monday and "put together a timetable" to find a replacement.

"I'm sure there are some candidates in the building, but our search will not be limited to being just internal," Freeman said.

Lee also wished his fellow coaches in the Western Lakes Activities Association the best.

"It's a great group to know," he said, "especially guys like John Piliatras (Churchill) and Tim Gabel (Stevenson). I hope they have success, continue to keep working hard and keep the faith."