

GPHS Lady Bulldogs Take Second at GCC

By Brooke Stoll

The Golden Plains Lady Bulldogs competed in the Gove County Classic on September 12 in Grinnell and Grainfield. The Bulldogs took 2nd in their pool in Grinnell and second overall in the tournament to advance to 11-2 on the 2020 volleyball season. "I think that we improved a lot throughout the day," said junior Rayna Taylor. "We played very well together to capture the 2nd place title, and I am proud of our team!"

For the first game of pool play, the Lady Dogs took on the St. Francis Indians. The Bulldogs got up 5-3 with an ACE serve from Morgan Wark. The Dogs and Indians competed closely, but the Dogs fell 23-25 in the first set. The Bulldogs were ready to play during the second set and went back and forth with the Indians. They finally took the lead and captured the close battle 26-24. The Bulldogs struggled in the third set and fell behind 3-6 early. They continued to battle and got back in the game to tie it up. The Bulldogs then fell to the Indians 19-25.

The Bulldogs had a two-game break and then took on the Hays JV team for the second game of pool play. Hays High JV filled in for a team that was not able to attend the tournament. Golden Plains and Hays High competed closely throughout the whole set. The Bulldogs finally went on to win the first set, 27-25, with an ACE from Ashley Stoll. The Dogs went into the second set with a win in mind. Carli Nieman and Kassie Miller had two big kills to help give the Bulldogs a 20-12 lead. The Bulldogs went on to win the game 25-19.

For the final game of pool play, the Bulldogs took on the Cheylin Cougars. The Bulldogs got up early and led 6-0 after Ashley served two aces. Kassie Miller and Breanna Rath had two quick kills and the Bulldogs found themselves leading 15-10. Brooke Stoll served two aces in a row to help boost the Bulldogs to a 25-13 win. Golden Plains never let up and pushed to a 25-17 victory over Cheylin.

The Bulldogs advanced to the semi-finals in Grainfield. They were ranked #2 from Pool B and took on the Wheatland/Grinnell Thunderhawks who were ranked #1 from Pool A. The Bulldogs and Thunderhawks were league rivals, so the Dogs knew they would have to bring their A-game. The Dogs went on to the court with excitement and jumped out to a 6-2 lead. They never looked back and found themselves ahead 12-7 when the Thunderhawks finally called a timeout. The Bulldogs continued to put the ball to the floor and won the first set 25-15. GPHS brought the energy for the second set and played great defense to get ahead 15-11. The Bulldogs continued to move well and captured the game 25-22.

The Dogs had not beaten the Thunderhawks in volleyball since October 15, 2013. "It felt so exciting to finally get a win in volleyball against the Thunderhawks," said junior Kassie Miller. "We improved a lot throughout the day and I think that we will continue to improve throughout the rest of the season!"

The Lady Bulldogs advanced to the finals and matched up with the St. Francis Indians for the second time of the day in the championship game. The Bulldogs wanted to get revenge on the Indians and took the first set 26-24. The Dogs struggled to put the ball on the floor and fell behind the Indians 12-17 in the second set. They tried to fight back but fell 18-25 in the second set. The Bulldogs could not find their rhythm and fell 15-25 in the third set. The Bulldogs captured the Runners-Up title for the second year in a row at the Gove County Classic. "We played together as a team all day and learned how to actually bring the energy to a game!" exclaimed sophomore Breanna Rath. "It always feels good to get some wins and beat our rivals!"

The Bulldogs moved to 11-2 on the season. They will travel to Victoria to continue their season as they take on the Northern Valley Huskies and Victoria Knights on September 15.