

Eagles second in conference again

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Sub-district begins Monday.

ARTHUR—Runner-up again.

That's where the Brady girls finished for the third straight year in the Sandhills Conference volleyball tournament.

It's not that second is a shameful finish. It's only a disappointment when the players and coaches know the skill level is there for a championship.

Mullen earned the title trophy Saturday night with a 10-25, 25-13, 25-14, 25-18 win over the Eagles in the SHC finals.

"The girls all agree," said coach Lynne Johnson. "They know they're capable of winning. They also know when they begin to feel fear. I think some of them just don't know exactly what to do about it."

Like momentum, fear and doubt are huge factors in the game of volleyball, Johnson said.

During the first set of the championship game against the Broncos, the Eagles played aggressive.

Johnson said they served well and Mullen was not doing a good job of picking up the ball on serve receive.

With adjustments in the second set, Mullen passed better and took over the momentum.

Mistakes began to pile on each other and that, Johnson said, is when the doubt set in.

"Volleyball is such a different game from other sports," Johnson said. "There's no free substitution. There's no time limit. Every play results in a point. You've got to be mentally sharp or it can get away from you quickly."

Brady couldn't recover its composure after losing the second set.

"I truly believe that killer instinct is something that's born in players," Johnson said. "You're either raised with that never-say-die mentality or you're not. It's not something you can teach to kids in an hour or two every day after school."

Still, Johnson will continue to work on mental toughness and confidence as her 18-4 team finishes out the regular season hosting a tough

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