

Eagle volleyball moves to 15-6 despite struggles

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Brady volleyball coach Lynne Johnson knows her Eagles have the talent to achieve the goals they've set for themselves.

She also knows they have the drive.

But what the Eagles haven't found yet, Johnson said, is just the right combination of players to make the team click.

"We're struggling a little bit and I can't put my finger on what's causing it," Johnson said.

It's not a huge problem, she said, because the girls have managed to build a respectable 15-6 record as the Sandhills Conference tournament approaches next week.

It's enough of an obstacle, though, that Johnson has made line-up changes again to try and remedy it.

The Eagles suffered a stunning loss to Wallace on Sept. 28 and turned around to lose to Medicine Valley in straight sets on Oct. 2, after having defeated the Raiders twice before.

"We looked lethargic," Johnson said. "No fire at all. Nothing was working, nothing."

Medicine Valley defeated Brady 25-20, 25-19 at the triangular in Curtis.

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Johnson played all reserves against Maywood in the second match of the night and the Eagles won 25-15, 25-20.

More line-up changes followed.

When Brady hosted undefeated North Platte St. Pat's Thursday night, junior Carissa Rayburn was back in the libero spot after spending a couple weeks in the setter position.

"We're simply trying to find what's best for the team," Johnson said. "Carissa is contagious on defense. The girls know she's going to go after every single ball and they'd better be ready to help out. We might have come out of the funk without another rotation change but I didn't really want to wait and see."

The Eagles played better against St. Pat's, taking a 9-2 advantage over the Irish to start the first set.

"We knew we didn't have anything to lose against St. Pat's," Johnson said. "The girls had fun playing and that makes a lot of difference."

Although the Irish defeated the Eagles 25-21, 25-13, 19-25, 25-14, Johnson said she felt better about the team's performance.

"It has to be fun or it's not worth it," Johnson said. "I want them to love the game."

Although Brady was pushed to four close sets by Hayes Center Friday night, the Eagles got back to winning by defeating the Cardinals 25-17, 26-28, 25-23, 26-24.

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“It seems like everyone we play brings their best game against us,” Johnson said. “For us to beat good teams, we’re going to have to all show up on the same night. We’ve struggled with that so far.”

Brady defeated Arthur County in head-to-head action Monday night 25-11, 25-14, 25-16 to move to 15-6 on the season.

The Eagles have the rest of the week to prepare for the Sandhills Conference tournament which begins at Stapleton on Tuesday.

Brady is seeded third and will play sixth-seed SMC (1-17) in the third match of the first round at approximately 6 p.m.