

Ollinger, J-Hawks fall short against Tigers

Written by Jim Ecker

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Amanda Ollinger still has not broken anyone's nose with her powerful kill shots on a volleyball court, but it might be just be a matter of time.

She also has not decided what she's going to do in college. That's just a matter of time as well.

Basketball or volleyball? Volleyball or basketball?

She's an all-state player in both sports, a versatile 6-foot-2 junior with great agility for someone that big and strong.

Ollinger collected 36 kills, 10 blocks and nine digs Tuesday for the Jefferson volleyball club in a hard-fought 3-2 loss to the Cedar Falls Tigers in a Mississippi Valley Conference match at the Jefferson gym.

Cedar Falls prevailed, 27-29, 25-20, 23-25, 25-23, 15-4, after the J-Hawks had taken a 2-1 lead after three sets.

It was an even match until the Tigers dominated that fifth set.

"Yeah, that was a tough one," said Ollinger. "I think it was fatigue, mentally and physically.

"It was all our own mistakes, but Cedar Falls played a great game."

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Ollinger originally thought she might pick a sport and a college before school began this year, but she's still sifting offers and trying to figure it out.

She loves both sports, so that makes it hard. The Iowa Hawkeyes have offered scholarships in volleyball and basketball. It's feasible to play both sports in college, but a stretch.

"It would be really, really tough at the Division I level," she said.

Kentucky, Creighton, Central Florida and Drake also want her for basketball. The University of Northern Iowa covets her skills for volleyball, so there are attractive offers on the table in both sports.

"We think she can be a top D-I volleyball player. Yeah, we do," said Jefferson Coach Mary Kay Van Oort.

Ollinger plans to take her time and not make any rash decisions, although the final verdict could come soon.

"I'm just going through the process, because I'm still very young. I'm just a junior," she noted. "I feel like I need more time to make that big decision.

"I'm just taking it day-by-day right now and letting it flow out."

Jefferson took a 21-20 lead in the fourth set when Ollinger blocked a shot by Cedar Falls ace Alicia Harrington, who finished the match with 18 vicious kills. Ollinger broke into a big smile after that block at the net.

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"Yeah," she said later, "that was my favorite part."

Van Oort liked the way her team played, for the most part. She was naturally disappointed when the fifth set slipped quickly away.

"We showed what we can do," said Van Oort. "I'm very optimistic. I told the players that.

"What we're most upset with is the fifth game. We just didn't finish strong. If we played them like we did in the other four games it could be very different right now. But we'll figure that out."

Alexis Moorier collected 47 kills for the J-Hawks. Madison Slagle had 14 digs and nine kills. Makenzie Tomkins contributed five kills and Abigail Ranschau had five blocks.

Jefferson's record fell to 1-5. Cedar Falls is 4-2.