

No. 8 Eagles rally past DMACC

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kirkwood women's volleyball team has been consistently inconsistent this season, including Wednesday night's match against DMACC.

"We had our ups and our downs," said Coach Jill Williams.

Fortunately for the eighth-ranked Eagles, there were more ups than downs.

Kirkwood rallied for a 17-25, 25-19, 25-21, 25-22 victory over the Bears in an ICCAC conference match at Johnson Hall.

The Eagles have modest records (for them) of 12-6 overall and 2-1 in the conference. They've whipped top-ranked Parkland this year, but were swept by unranked Southeastern at home.

Consistency is the key.

"It's definitely a goal. We talk about it all the time," said Anna Gorsich, a 6-foot freshman from Linn-Mar.

"It has to do with our energy not being there and our intensity not always being there. So that's definitely one of our goals, to stay consistent."

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The Eagles jumped to a 10-4 lead in the first set against DMACC, but were outscored 21-7 the rest of that game. They grabbed an 8-3 lead at the start of the second set, fell behind 14-13 and rallied for a 25-19 triumph to square the match.

Kirkwood enjoyed a 21-14 lead in the third set, saw it dwindle to 23-21 and prevailed 25-21 on two straight points by Gorsich, first with a vicious kill and then with an ace serve.

It was more of the same in the decisive fourth set. Kirkwood took a 12-5 lead and was playing well, but DMACC zoomed ahead 21-18 before the Eagles settled down again and won the match on a kill by freshman Aubrin Dittmer.

Williams liked the way her team responded in that fourth set.

"We have some resilience and we have game and we can take care of business," she said.

"We were not going to relax and wait for the fifth set. I like that about them.

"I liked the fight in them at that point. That was a good challenge for us."

Dittmer finished with 11 kills. Gorsich had 10 kills and 23 digs. Madi Wagaman collected 35 assists. Maranda Wheelock had 25 digs, Wagaman 18 digs and Olivia Richards 14. Maggie Peters blocked five shots. Abbie Ericson and Taylor Carey swatted four shots.

Williams used 11 players, including seven freshmen, with different lineups on the floor at different times. "We want to continue doing that," she said.

DMACC fell to 5-7 overall and 1-2 in the conference.