

Kirkwood makes NJCAA volleyball tourney

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IOWA FALLS - The Kirkwood Community College volleyball team earned a free trip to Toledo, Ohio on Saturday.

Toledo may not be the vacation capital of the world, but that's where the NJCAA Division II national tournament will be held Nov. 15-17.

The fourth-ranked Eagles defeated No. 10 DMACC, 25-22, 23-25, 25-23, 25-20, in the regional finals to reach the national tournament for the second time in three years.

Alexus Litts, a 5-foot-10 sophomore from Cedar Rapids Kennedy, collected 43 assists in the regional finals and was named the Most Valuable Player on the all-tournament team.

"I thought she did a really nice job distributing, trying to feed the hot hitters," Kirkwood Coach Jill Williams remarked.

The Eagles will take a 37-8 record into the national tournament.

"We should go into it with a top seed," Williams said. "Once we get there, 16 teams are all going to be at a high level."

Williams described the regional finals Saturday as a roller-coaster, but said her team kept the upper hand most of the match. "Really throughout the four sets we were the team that was in control," she said.

Kirkwood used a balanced attack to defeat DMACC. Erin Walker led the Eagles with 13 kills. Courtney Busch and Alicen Wintermote had 10 kills apiece, Ashley Gonzalez had nine and Brittany Ambler finished with eight.

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Cali Beyer had 29 digs for the Eagles. Wintermote had six blocks. Gonzalez and Chelsea Gryp contributed five blocks apiece.

Kirkwood finished eighth at the national tournament in 2010. Williams thinks the Eagles have a good chance of finishing higher than that this time.

"I feel good about it, because of the tough schedule we've played all season," she said. "We've done a nice job of preparing our kids."