

Warriors pull off reverse sweep, advance to regional championship

BY ABBY HOOVEN

Facing match point with program history on the line, Kendall Hutchison placed a tip deep into an empty area of Oldham County's back row to set off a frenzy of celebrations from players, fans and a rambunctious student section.

The kill not only secured Eminence's spot in the regional finals for the first time in program history, but it also punctuated a ferocious comeback effort by the Warriors to earn a reverse sweep victory over the Lady Colonels in the Eighth Region semifinals on Tuesday, Oct. 28.

Eminence dropped the opening two sets by scores of 25-20 and 25-17 before mounting a comeback with wins in the final three sets (25-17, 25-18, 15-13) to move on to the Eighth Region Championship on Thursday evening.

"It's amazing. I mean these girls, we were down by two sets, and we made an adjustment as far as the lineup goes, and it worked and we pulled everything together and were able to pull out an awesome win," said head coach Mike Bulgrin.

Eminence was active early on offense and defense to take a 5-2 lead in set one. Hutchison had two consecutive blocks, and Marissa White added a kill and an ace to put the Warriors ahead.

Oldham County recovered and utilized a balanced offense to shift the momentum as the set progressed.

Tough serves, including a pair of aces by Alex Williams, helped the Lady Colonels take the lead, and Ava Arterburn added several hard kills from the outside to extend the margin to 8-6.

Rylee Shupert contributed a pair of outside kills around kills from Kayla DaSilva and Maddie Vogt before an Arterburn ace moved the lead out to 11-8 and forced a



The Eminence volleyball team celebrates after a hard-fought 3-2 win over Oldham County in the Eighth Region semifinals on Tuesday, Oct. 28.

Warrior timeout.

Eminence stayed within reach, though, and kept fighting at the net with a block from Bryce Berry and Brooklyn Smith and a hard outside kill from Berry.

However, Oldham County maintained its lead and capitalized on a few Warrior miscues to go ahead by four.

Shupert continued to battle up front with two huge outside kills and Smith stuffed an overpass to trim the lead to 15-9.

Both teams kept attacking with numerous kills from various points along the net, and consecutive kills from Berry put Eminence back within one, 21-20, late in the set.

Yet, Oldham County scored the final four points of the set, including an ace by Williams on set point, to take a 1-0 match lead.

The Lady Colonels sustained their momentum in set two, taking a 6-1 lead early in the stanza.

The Warriors struggled to contain Oldham County's offense, with three kills and an ace from libero Bella Warner highlighting the early

run.

Eminence fought back, though, with three huge swings from Shupert, including a crushing hit down the line to cut the lead to 8-6.

Shupert struck again with an outside kill and Berry ended a long rally with a kill down the outside line, but errors by the Warriors added up to help Oldham County go ahead 15-9.

The Lady Colonels furthered their lead to 19-10 with a middle kill off the block and two smart defensive plays at the net, but Eminence stayed the course and followed with a 3-0 run.

Self-inflicted wounds by the Warriors down the stretch put Oldham County ahead 24-14.

Eminence clawed back with a mini 3-0 run before a service error gave the Lady Colonels a 2-0 match lead.

The score remained close early in a competitive third set, with both teams seeming to exchange points for the first 20 plays.

Eminence also adjusted its lineup in the third set, going to a 5-1 offense with White

setting all six rotations.

Bailey Hegg, Shupert and White contributed kills from the right side and outside at the beginning of the set to give Eminence a 6-4 lead.

Oldham County responded with a 4-0 run to take control, but Berry sandwiched two outside kills around a push kill from Maggie Rye to keep the Warriors within reach.

With a hitting error and a solo block by Smith, Eminence regained the lead at 10-9.

Both teams traded points to tie the game several times before Eminence created some separation.

With the score tied at 12 all, the Warriors scored four straight points, three of which were Shupert outside kills, to move ahead by four.

Oldham County fought back to tie the game at 17 all, utilizing a few Warrior errors and a pair of right side kills during the 5-1 run.

Eminence held off Oldham County's surge, though, and ended the set on an 8-0 scoring run to keep the match alive.

Shupert kickstarted the run with an outside kill and kept Oldham County out of system

with her service pressure during the streak.

Hutchison and Berry supplemented Shupert's efforts with several smart plays at the net to help Eminence secure a 25-17 set victory.

The Warriors picked up their intensity even more in the fourth set, jumping out to an 8-4 lead.

Shupert, Berry and Hegg shined at the net with tough kills, and White and Hegg served an ace apiece in the early streak.

Shupert and Berry blistered outside hits shortly after to push the lead to 11-5 and White dropped in a setter dump kill to the middle of the court to keep the margin at six.

Oldham County tried to slow Eminence's momentum with hard swings, but the Warriors answered each attack to stay in control.

A combination of kills from Smith and Shupert, and a Berry ace, pushed the advantage to 18-12 before the Lady Colonels chipped away at the lead with a 3-0 run.

Shupert silenced the comeback with an overpass slam, and Hutchison and White blocked an Oldham County swing to put the lead at 20-16.

Errors for the Lady Colonels added up late in the set, allowing Eminence to claim a fourth set win and force a deciding fifth set.

Both teams ramped up their efforts in the final set and kept the margin on the scoreboard at two points or less for the entirety of the set.

After Eminence went ahead 2-0, Oldham County scored the next four points with a series of kills by Arterburn.

Hegg sent an overpass to the floor and Kendall picked up a middle kill off the block to cut the lead to 6-5.

Another Eminence kill tied the game at six all before Arterburn sent a right side attack through the block to put the Lady Colonels ahead.

The Warriors fought to take

the lead again on a kill by Hutchison, and two plays later, Berry gave Eminence a 9-8 lead with an outside kill.

Oldham County knotted the set at nine all with a hitting error on a long rally by Eminence before Smith sent a kill to the back corner to put the Warriors ahead 10-9.

The Lady Colonels earned the next two points, forcing an Eminence timeout, but Eminence bounced back to take the next two points, including a quick set kill by Shupert, to prompt an Oldham County timeout.

Arterburn evened the score at 12 all with an outside kill through the block, but Shupert responded with a kill down the line and a hitting error by Oldham County brought up match point.

The Lady Colonels withstood the first match point to trim the lead to 14-13 before Hutchison's tip kill concluded Eminence's hard-fought comeback win.

"I think they all fought incredibly hard. I think that they were exhausted at the end of this match," said Bulgrin. "I can't say enough about these girls. We were down two sets and we fought back and we reverse swept them, and that last game was a nail biter, that 15-13 was very, very close. Oldham County is a tough team, definitely don't want to take anything away from them. They played incredibly hard and we were just very fortunate that we came out on top."

With the victory, Eminence advanced to the regional title game against the reigning Eighth Region champion, North Oldham, on Thursday night.

"I think it's the first time that Eminence has gone into the finals of the region in volleyball. They're very excited about that. It's going to be a good match when we go up against North. I think we will compete very well with them," said Bulgrin.

Eminence defeats Rebels in regular season finale

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Kenien Foree put the Warriors in the red zone.

After a penalty, Eminence advanced again with clutch receptions from Chambers and Jackson Preher, but Owen County broke up a promising pass down the middle on fourth down to halt the scoring opportunity.

The Warriors stayed the course and put together another tough defensive sequence to keep the Rebel offense contained.

After Eminence forced a punt, Ortega utilized his agility on the ground for several gains, and Foree caught another pass down the middle to keep the possession going.

Later in the drive, Owen County's defense stepped up to stifle Eminence's attack and force another turnover on downs.

Following another Warrior defensive stand, Eminence almost broke onto the scoreboard, but a fumble along the goal line fell into the hands of the Rebels to shut down the scoring opportunity.

The Warriors shut down another Rebel drive before finally taking the lead with under a minute left in the first half.

Ortega powered through the defense for a 3-yard touchdown run with 25.9 seconds left, giving the Warriors a 60 lead at the break.

Owen County bounced back at the outset of the second half and capitalized on its pass game to take the lead.

Brayden Lynch found Trip Allnut early in the possession for a 24-yard gain and a first down, and Lynch capped off the drive with a 31-yard touchdown pass along the Rebel sideline to Brody Towles.

Lynch hit the PAT, putting Owen County in front 7-6 with 8:30 left in the third quarter.

Eminence kept fighting and countered on its next drive to reclaim the lead.

The Warriors overcame a few penalties and had several strong carries by Steed and receptions by Foree and

Preher to advance the ball into the red zone.

Ortega completed the possession with a 4-yard touchdown, and connected with Preher against pressure on the 2-point conversion to give Eminence a 14-7 lead with 54.4 seconds left in the third period.

Owen County looked to regain control at the start of the fourth quarter and used a 22-yard pass to Allnut along the Warrior sideline to enter Eminence territory early in the drive.

Facing fourth down, Lynch battled for a strong gain to keep the possession alive, but the Rebels were stifled by a personal foul call to bring up another fourth down situation shortly after.

Preher intercepted the Rebels' pass attempt to contain the attack and give Eminence a chance to further its lead.

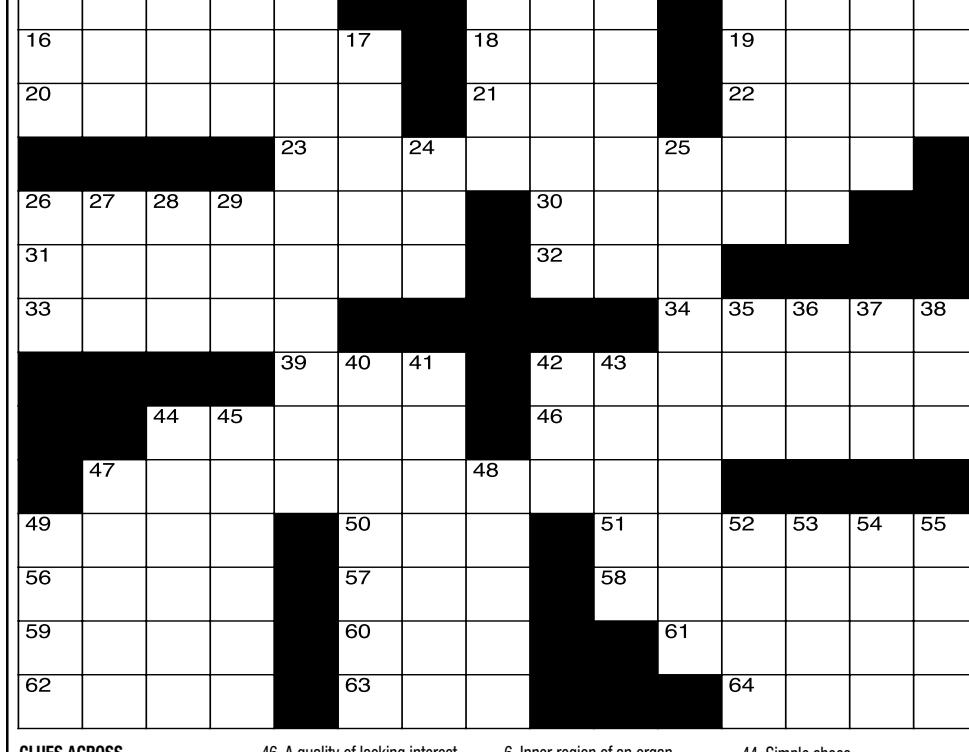
Steed and Preher combined for a number of quality plays for the Warrior offense, but Owen County stymied Eminence's fourth-down attempt to conclude the possession with 2:48 left on the clock.

Owen County had a chance to tie the game, but Charlie Prenn came up with a huge interception to seal Eminence's victory.

"Coach Heath does a great job with the defense," said Sanderson. "He uses the phrase bend don't break often, and that's how we were. We were down on our end of the field multiple times, and he did a great job of getting the boys ready to force turnovers and put us in a position to win a football game."

With the win, Eminence heads into the postseason with a 4-6 record, and will host Nicholas County in the opening round of the Class A playoffs on Nov. 7.

"That's a good football team that'll come in. They made the playoffs, and they're going to try and run over our face, so we've got to come ready for that fight," said Sanderson.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. El ___, Texas town
- 5. Rocker's tool
- 9. A lot
- 12. Traveling by ground
- 14. Spelling competition
- 15. Two-toed sloth
- 16. Small perfumed bag
- 18. "Much __ about nothing"
- 19. Tough-skinned mollusk
- 20. Removes from record
- 21. It warms the planet
- 22. Leafy green
- 23. Quality of arriving favorably
- 26. Living thing
- 30. "Six of Crows" author Bardugo
- 31. Got around a rule
- 32. Resin from burned substance
- 33. Ira seaport
- 34. Religious leaders
- 35. Fugitives are on it
- 42. Samson's influencer
- 44. Italian city
- 46. A quality of lacking interest
- 47. Predatory tropical fishes
- 49. Nobel physician Isidor
- 50. Luck
- 51. Stationary part of a motor or generator
- 56. Orthopedic professional group (abbr.)
- 57. One point south of due east
- 58. It follows 79
- 59. Paper currency
- 60. Anger
- 61. Spanish seaport
- 62. Sleep in a rough place
- 63. Famous museum
- 64. Selfs
- 66. Inner region of an organ
- 67. Flowers
- 68. A bog
- 69. Remove a fastening
- 70. Membranes
- 71. Enormous
- 72. One who abstains from drink
- 73. Malayan wild ox
- 74. Type of student
- 75. Rejecting all moral principles
- 76. Sino-Soviet block
- 77. Egyptian unit of weight
- 78. Wrong
- 79. Make a mistake
- 80. Indicates location
- 81. Boxing's "GOAT"
- 82. Where wrestlers compete
- 83. Timid
- 84. Disney town
- 85. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
- 86. Male parent
- 87. Remove for good

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Bullfighting maneuver
- 2. From a distance
- 3. Soul and calypso song
- 4. Expressions of delight
- 5. Lower in esteem
- 6. Hindi courtesy title for a man
- 7. Not pleased
- 8. "Atlas Shrugged" author
- 9. CIA officer and writer
- 10. Hoodlum
- 11. Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
- 12. Woolen rugs

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