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**Sports Writer**

The Wallace Wildcats competed in the Hayes Center Triangular on Tuesday, Sept. 15. The Cats' first opponent was the Hayes Center Cardinals. The Wildcats defeated the Cardinals in straight sets 25-16 and 25-18.

The Cardinals were ready to defend their home court, and the Lady Cats seemed a bit flat for the first time all season. The Wildcats made some good plays, but really seemed to struggle to build any momentum. In the end the Lady Cats did win in straight sets, but their play left fans wanting for more.

When asked about the match, coach Rohde said, "The girls played pretty well at times. We had some really nice plays, but never did get into a rhythm." He added, "Hayes Center played us really tough tonight."

Leading the team offensively against the Cardinals was senior Jena Aylward (1 ace) with 10 points, followed by junior Laura O'Brien with 6 points (1 ace), and senior Katie West (1 ace) and junior Shanice Harris (2 aces) each with 5 points. Juniors Katelynn Hild had 3 points, and Whitney Smith had 1 point. Leading the team with set assists was Hild with 13, followed by O'Brien with 7.

Defensively, Aylward led the team with 8 kills and 2 blocks, followed closely by Harris with 7 kills. West had 6 kills and 1 block, Smith had 4 kills, and sophomore Brooke Hochstetler had 1 block.

The Lady Cats then had to face the hard-hitting Tigers of Dundy County/Stratton. The cats won this match in straight sets 25-19 and 25-23.

The Cats second match went much better than the first. The tough Tigers forced the Lady Cats to find their desire to win. The Tigers were strong and at times looked like they would force the Cats to a third set, but their intensity seemed to raise the level of play of the Wildcats.

"We played really well at times, and at others not so well," said Rohde. "The girls showed great character in the last set being down 16 to 21, and coming back to win. We had four huge ace blocks to end the game, and they were definitely game changing plays."

Leading the team offensively against the Tigers were West (1 ace) and Hild both with 8 points, followed by Aylward with 5 points (2 aces). Harris had 4 points, and O'Brien and Smith each had 1 point. Leading the team with set assists was Hild with 15, followed by O'Brien with 9.

Defensively, Aylward led the team with 9 kills and 2 blocks, followed closely by West with 8 kills and 5 blocks. Smith had 5 kills and 2 blocks, and Harris had 4 kills.

Stapleton McPherson Co.

On Friday night the Wildcats face a newly combined team, the Stapleton McPherson County Cyclones. The Lady Cats defeated the SMC Cyclones in straight sets for parents night 25-10, 25-14, 25-18.

The Cyclones were tough, but the Cats were ready to fight and their defense was outstanding. The entire team worked hard.

In the third set neither team was willing to relinquish the lead, as the score went back and forth, leaving the teams tied at 5.

It was then that senior Jena Aylward stepped up to give the Cats the lead on a six-point service run. The cyclones weren't ready to go quietly into the night as they rallied back to within three, forcing the Wildcats' coaches to call a time out to refocus their team.

The ladies left the bench determined to get back on track, and that they did, giving Rohde a chance to play a couple of less experienced players.

Although the Cyclones fought hard to stay in the match, the Wildcat took the final set 25 to 18. "We played really well tonight, we played good defense," said Rohde. "Our passing was dead on. I was very pleased with the effort and intensity that the girls showed."

Offensively, the setters led the team in points with Hild scoring 11 points, followed by O'Brien who scored 9 points (1 ace). Aylward also scored 9 points, Harris scored 6 points, West scored 4 points (2 aces), and Smith (1 ace) and senior Josi Hasenauer each scored 2 points. Leading the team with set assists was O'Brien with 14, followed by Hild with 10.

Leading the cats defensively Friday night was Aylward with 14 kills and 4 blocks, followed closely by West with 8 kills and 9 blocks. Smith had 4 kills, Harris had 3 kills, and Hild and Hochstetler each had 1 kill.

Following Friday's match the Wallace Blue Boosters sponsored a new event, the popcorn serve.

Because it was parents night, the parents of the senior volleyball players were asked to serve the ball three times in an effort to hit one of several blue squares placed on the opposing court.

The first three to serve were former Lady Cats, Crystal "Toad" West (1982 graduate), Kathy Pacheco (1982 graduate), and Kendra Aylward (1984 graduate, who played in the 1983 state Volleyball tournament), although failing to win a bag of popcorn, these veteran Cats showed their daughters they still had it.

After all of the moms had taken their turn, the dads stepped up to the line.

Leading the dads was Todd Hasenauer, serving two balls, and missing only by inches each time. The third time, however, Todd was assisted by his darling daughters, who proceeded to hit his serve with a blue square. In true daddy's girl form the rest of the senior girls followed suit.

This new event was a great crowd pleaser, and was the perfect compliment to parents night.

The Lady Cats will travel to Paxton to play in their tournament on Tuesday, Sept. 22., starting at 5 p.m., and on Friday, Sept. 25, the Cats will face the Hayes Center Cardinals in Hayes Center, starting at 4:30.