

Work continues for KMHS volleyball

Published: 09/21/2008

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ROSWELL - Kennesaw Mountain's volleyball team still has some work to do.

The Lady Mustangs are still suffering some lapses on both sides of the net and Northview let them know it Saturday afternoon in the Cobb/Fulton Challenge at Roswell High School. The Lady Mustangs built early leads in both games against Northview but couldn't sustain them en route to a 25-18, 25-21 loss.

That doesn't mean there is a sense of urgency. Coach Tonya Kern-Honea said her team is making strides, even though they have more losses than they did this time last season.

The Lady Mustangs had a 16-13 advantage in the first game and a 13-10 lead in the second against Northview before the defending Class AAAAA state champion took advantage of Kennesaw Mountain's back row.

"We struggled on our serve-receive. That was the key," Kern-Honea said. "We played with more heart (Saturday), but we're striving to reduce the unforced errors on the defensive side and serve-receive side."

A Northview ace and a Kennesaw Mountain passing error allowed the defending state champion to tie the first-game score at 16-16 before Gaby Smiley hit a kill to give the Lady Titans the lead.

The lead swelled to 23-18 as the Lady Mustangs continued to struggle defensively. Then Northview put the Lady Mustangs away in the first game on an Ashley Veach kill and a Gialenios ace.

"I think we have good defensive players. We're just not in the right spots when we need to be," said setter Kaylee McGrew, who claims that will be an easy adjustment. "We've stepped it up this year. Our mindsets are right. We just have to put it to the test."

A Sydney Koon kill on a free ball in the second game took away Kennesaw Mountain's second-game lead, tying the game at 13-13, and a Lady Mustang hitting error gave Northview the lead it would not relinquish.

Northview eventually built a 19-16 lead on a Smiley kill. An Abby Hutchinson slam cut the lead to two points at 21-19 before a kill by Veach and a block Koon broke the Northview lead open at 23-19.

The Lady Mustangs got two points back on a kill and ace by Mariah Booth before Northview clinched the match on a Lauren Busing kill and a Veach ace.

"Mariah and Lauren (Hutchinson) had a good match and our serving was decent," Kern-Honea said. "We're just trying to find the role player (on defense and serve-receive)."

The Lady Mustangs defeated Alpharetta (25-10, 25-17) and Roswell (25-22, 25-9) earlier in the day, but lost to Chattahoochee (25-20, 25-18).

? Lassiter fell into a minor slump after starting the season with a 19-0 record.

The Lady Trojans lost four in a row - two coming against Northview and Chattahoochee in the Cobb/Fulton Challenge - but ended the playdate Saturday with wins over Alpharetta (25-10, 25-18) and Roswell (25-21, 28-26).

"We're at that point in the schedule when it's a quintessential reality check," Lassiter coach Dottie Saye said. "We have to get our heads back in to it and learn from our mistakes."

Katy McCollister had 23 kills and 25 digs on the day for the Lady Trojans. Taylor Macgomery added 15 kills and six solo blocks. Hannah Reinke posted 31 digs and 12 kills and Melissa Woodall contributed with 30. Emily Weissert dished out 56 assists.