

STORY OF THE 2015 BULLDOG VOLLEYBALL TEAM



“This has been one of the most fun seasons just because we know we can beat anybody.”

--Junior Paige Getz





Overall: 26-9 • GPAC: 12-4 (5th) • Home: 12-5 • Road: 9-2 • Neutral: 5-2

AUGUST

Aug. 22	Bethany College (Kan.)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0
Aug. 25	Belleuve University	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
<i>Saint Xavier Tournament: Aug. 28-29</i>			
Aug. 28	Roosevelt University (Ill.)	Chicago, Ill.	W, 3-0
	St. Xavier University (Ill.)	Chicago, Ill.	W, 3-2
Aug. 29	University of Saint Francis (Ill.)	Chicago, Ill.	W, 3-1
	Trinity Christian College (Ill.)	Chicago, Ill.	W, 3-0

SEPTEMBER

<i>Bulldog Bash: Sept. 4-5</i>			
Sept. 4	Benedictine College (Kan.)	Seward, Neb.	L, 1-3
Sept. 5	Bethel College (Kan.)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0
	York College	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
Sept. 9	* (19) Hastings College	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0
<i>Five Points Bank Invitational at Hastings College: Sept. 11-12 - WATCH LIVE</i>			
Sept. 11	MidAmerica Nazarene University (Kan.)	Hastings, Neb.	L, 0-3
	Montana Western University	Hastings, Neb.	W, 3-0
Sept. 12	Carroll College (Mont.)	Hastings, Neb.	L, 0-3
	(20) Montana Tech University	Hastings, Neb.	W, 3-2
Sept. 16	* (24) Doane College	Crete, Neb.	W, 3-0
Sept. 19	* College of Saint Mary	Omaha, Neb.	W, 3-1
Sept. 19	Waldorf College (Iowa)	Omaha, Neb.	W, 3-0
Sept. 23	* (4) Midland University	Seward, Neb.	L, 0-3
Sept. 26	* (11) Northwestern College	Orange City, Iowa	W, 3-2
Sept. 29	Central Christian College (Kan.)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0

OCTOBER

Oct. 2	* Morningside College	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
Oct. 3	* Briar Cliff University	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
Oct. 7	* (21) Hastings College	Hastings, Neb.	L, 0-3
Oct. 10	* Nebraska Wesleyan University (Homecoming)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0
Oct. 14	* (2) Midland University	Fremont, Neb.	W, 3-2
Oct. 21	* College of Saint Mary (Pink Night)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-0
Oct. 23	* Dakota Wesleyan University	Mitchell, S.D.	W, 3-0
Oct. 24	* Mount Marty College	Yankton, S.D.	W, 3-1
Oct. 28	* Doane College	Seward, Neb.	L, 1-3
Oct. 31	* (8) Dordt College	Seward, Neb.	L, 0-3

NOVEMBER

Nov. 4	* Nebraska Wesleyan University	Lincoln, Neb.	W, 3-0
<i>GPAC Tournament: Nov. 7, 11, 14</i>			
Nov. 7	(17) Northwestern College (GPAC Quarterfinals)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
Nov. 11	College of Saint Mary (GPAC Semifinals)	Seward, Neb.	W, 3-1
Nov. 14	(8) Midland University (GPAC Championship)	Fremont, Neb.	L, 0-3
Nov. 21	Olivet Nazarene University (NAIA Opening Round)	Seward, Neb.	L, 0-3

Statistical Highlights of 2015

- Fourth highest single-season winning percentage in program history (.743)
- Ranked in the top 15 in the nation for the first time since 2000; ranked in 10-straight polls to end the season
- First-ever GPAC championship appearance
- First-ever national tournament appearance
- Coach Scott Mattera was named tri-coach of the year in the GPAC
- Seven Bulldogs named All-GPAC
- Junior Alayna Kavanaugh and sophomore Jocelyn Garcia recieved honorable mention All-America honors
- Five NAIA Scholar-Athletes
- Sophomore Jocelyn Garcia named AVCA West Central Libero of the Year
- Junior Alayna Kavanaugh also named to West Central Region team
- Sophomore Annie Friesen named to the honorable mention West Central Region Team
- Ranked third in the GPAC in kills per set (13.5) just behind Northwestern and Dordt (13.6)
- Junior Alayna Kavanaugh ranked 12th in the nation in assists per game (10.82)
- Sophomore Annie Friesen ranked eighth in the nation in hitting percentage (.374)
- Senior Claire White surpassed 1,000 kills as a Bulldog



Scott
Mattera



Head Coach

Alex
Szalawiga



Assistant Coach

Amanda
Abbott



Graduate Assistant
Coach

Rachel
Miller



Dir. of Volleyball
Operations

#1 Katie
Peterson



SR • M/OH

#2 Naomi
Quigg



JR • OH/RS

#6 Kendra
Dinkel



SR • DS

#7 Claire
White



SR • OH

#8 Samantha
McConnell



SR • M/RS

#9 Libby
Zagel



SR • S/RS

#10 Paige
Getz



JR • OH

#13 Annie
Friesen



SO • M

#14 Alayana
Kavanaugh



JR • S

#15 Mikayla
Higgins



SO • M/RS

#19 Courtney
Jurgens



SO • OH

#24 Jocelyn
Garcia



SO • Lib.

#25 Jenna
Habegger



FR • M/OH

#26 Tiegen
Skains



JR • OH/RS

#27 Taylor
Workman



JR • M

#29 Kelsey
Dinkel



SR • DS



2015 SEASON PREVIEW



Powerful floor-thumping kills. Thunderous crowd reactions. Twenty wins. First GPAC tournament win in six seasons. The 2014 campaign reenergized a program that has doubled its win total over the past two years. According to fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera and the Bulldogs, that breakthrough was just a start.

Do-it-all senior first team all-conference outside hitter Claire White has high aspirations for her third and final season as a Bulldog. Says White, "I can't even begin to explain how much bigger and better things are going to be this year. People are going to see a lot more consistency and a lot more passion and a lot more of everything. We're going to keep climbing the ladder and moving up."

Expectations are as high as they've been under Mattera, who has stocked his roster with powerful hitters who figure to feast off the precision passing of another returning first team all-conference choice in junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh. She will pepper the ball to the likes of White, junior outside hitter Paige Getz, junior right side Tiegen Skains and middles (sophomore) Annie Friesen and (junior) Taylor Workman.

With a wealth of proven, seasoned veterans, the Bulldogs know the time is now.

"I want to embrace the role and not pitty-patty around it," Mattera said. "It's time for us to step up and be one of the favorites and be one of the top dogs in the GPAC. We need to embrace that role and start acting like it, instead of acting like the little engine that could."

White is the headliner and one of the primary fuels for this Bulldog locomotive. After transferring in from NCAA Division II Washburn University in 2013, the native of Exeter, Neb., has piled up 714 kills while also handling a heavy burden defensively.

While focused on being a solid all-around squad, Concordia will again thrill fans with its powerful attacking style. Last season the Bulldogs spent much of the year ranked among the top 25 teams nationally in terms of hitting percentage. They want to continue to cultivate a spirited Walz Arena with a crowd-pleasing style of play.

"Our style is very powerful, diverse and fast," Mattera said. "We're going to work extremely hard defensively and ball control-wise, but we're a team that wants to end points quickly. We want to play an exciting style that's really fast and athletic and fun to watch. That's the identity we're trying to build within the program. I think we've got a shot to be even better in that area than we were last year, just because of the development of our quarterback Alayna and all of those hitters returning that understand shot making and putting the ball away."

Like White, Getz, a 5-foot-11 native of Paola, Kan., has pasted more than 300 kills in each of the past two seasons. White and Getz are flanked on the right side by Skains, who improved by leaps and bounds from her freshman to sophomore season. She topped 200 kills and surfaced with her biggest performance of her career to date (20 kills) in the victory over No. 21 Dordt in late October.

And even with the graduation of second team all-conference



pick Mariah Schamp, Concordia maintains solid depth in the middle. The 6-foot-1 Workman was hitting a cool .408 when she went down with an ACL tear at Morningside last Sept. 27. Known for her colorful head bands, Friesen has the potential and the ability to make a big jump of her own following a solid freshman campaign.

“That was a real strength for us last year,” Mattera said. “It was one of our keys to victory. You could see that in the matches we were successful in. It was when we were connecting with our middles. That’s a huge key for every team, but especially us the way we run fast stuff to the outside and diverse stuff to the right side. If our middles are on and holding that blocker, things go well for everybody.”

In the back row, Mattera must replace the production of defensive specialist Carli Smith, who racked up 1,761 career digs and passed serve receive at a 93.3 percent clip in 421 sets played as a Bulldog. Enter sophomore Jocelyn Garcia, who played terrifically in Concordia’s straight sets win over Hastings in last year’s GPAC tournament. Both the Dinkels, Kendra and Kelsey, also figure into the mix. Kendra has proven she can step into the role having dug up 24 attacks versus Nebraska Wesleyan in 2013. Meanwhile, Kelsey is making a positional switch after playing outside hitter.

Among the newcomers, Jenna Habegger made the most noise over the summer. The Pawnee City High School product followed up a big senior season by leading all players at the Nebraska Coaches Association All-Star Volleyball Match with 11 kills. Mattera also brings in another Exeter-Miligan graduate in defensive specialist Madison Horne, who was coached in high school by Darcy White, Claire’s mother.

Combine all these elements with the leadership provided by the likes of senior Libby Zagel and several others, and the makings are there for something special. White also points to the team’s culture of positivity as another important factor.

“We wouldn’t be the time we are without the relationships that we have on and off

the court,” White said. “All the girls have such great personalities. You can’t not get along with anybody on the team. Our practices are enjoyable because we get along so well. Everything is always so positive.”

This is the time of year when optimism permeates virtually every program around the nation but for the Bulldogs, there’s a legitimacy to the feel-good vibes seemingly shared by all inside the Walz locker room. After being picked seventh in the GPAC last preseason, Concordia leapt up to fourth and hosted in the GPAC quarterfinals.

It was a big, big step. The question is: what comes next?

“We use the term breakthrough and it’s been thrown around about last season, but there’s still so much work left to be done,” Mattera said. “We’re looking for another breakthrough. We still have lots of goals in front of us: competing for a GPAC championship, making nationals and things like that. We want to come together and take full advantage of our opportunities and the potential we have.”

Expectations are clearly higher, but White vows, “We’re not going to let the pressure get to us.”

Concordia opens the 2015-16 athletic year for all Bulldog sports programs when it welcomes Bethany College (Kan.) to Walz Arena on Saturday, Aug. 22 for a 1 p.m. tilt as part of Launch weekend on campus.





BULLDOGS SCORCH BETHANY IN SEASON OPENER

Aug. 22, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Bethany 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (9)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia & Kelsey Dinkel (7)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (35)

SEWARD, Neb. – In its first outing of the 2015 season, the Concordia University volleyball team delivered on head coach Scott Mattera's vision of showcasing a fast, powerful and athletic squad. The Bulldogs kicked off the new season by hitting a sweltering .522 to dispatch of visiting Bethany College, 25-15, 25-11, 25-8, on Saturday afternoon.

The victory moved Concordia (1-0) to 16-2 over its last 18 home matches. The Bulldogs won their latest contest inside Walz Arena, fueled by the work of middles Annie Friesen (nine kills) and Taylor Workman (six kills, four blocks). The duo combined for 15 kills on only 18 swings.

"I'm really proud of the ladies. You saw a whole bunch of kids just plain do their jobs today," Mattera said. "There wasn't a player on our roster that didn't do exactly what she is expected to do when she gets in there. I'm so happy with us right now."

Junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh, a returning first team all-conference performer, served the ball up on a tee for an array of attacking teammates. In addition to the eye-popping production in the middle, senior Claire White notched eight kills and junior Paige Getz added seven. Kavanaugh assisted on 35 of the team's 42 kills.

There was very little that did not go the

Bulldogs way. Bethany tallied the first point of the afternoon on an attack error, but Workman came right back with a kill that initiated a 5-0 run. Concordia dominated the rest of the way, posting hitting percentages of .789 and .600 in the second and third sets, respectively. Meanwhile, the Swedes struggled all afternoon to get anything going on the attack. They hit -.016 for the match.

For Workman, it was her first live action in an official match since she tore her ACL in a win at Morningside on Sept. 27 of last season.

"It was awesome," Workman said. "It was definitely a little scary. I wasn't sure how it was going to go or how my knee was going to react."

Friesen totaled three kills in each of the three sets to equal her team high total. She was 9-for-9 on the attack until Bethany finally dug up a Friesen smash with Concordia leading 14-3 in the third set. Getz scalded five kills during the Bulldogs' ultra-efficient second game in which they hit .789 and ended 15 points via kill.

Mattera also lauded the work of service specialists Katie Peterson and Libby Zigel. They had one ace apiece while routinely rifling missiles that kept Bethany off balance and out of rhythm.

"I can't tell you how hard they have worked to find that niche and they are doing a dynamite job of it," Mattera said. "I'm so proud of them."

Fifteen different Bulldogs appeared in Saturday's match. Freshman Jenna Habegger saw her first collegiate action and capitalized by nailing kills on both of her attack attempts. She was one of nine Bulldogs with at least one kill. In the razor-sharp effort, Concordia committed only seven attack errors.

Players up and down the roster contributed to the blowout victory.

"Part of what's picking up our program so much is the level of play in practice," Mattera said. "There's very little drop off between the first and second teams here. We couldn't be happier with today."

Leila Whaley paced the Swedes with seven kills. The Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference member has now dropped 20-consecutive matches dating back to last season.

Defensively for the Bulldogs, Kelsey Dinkel and Jocelyn Garcia tied for a team high with seven digs apiece. White chipped in six digs.

The Bulldogs now look forward to an in-state battle with Bellevue University inside Walz Arena at 7 p.m. on Tuesday. Concordia will attempt to avenge last season's tense 21-25, 25-19, 25-22, 15-25, 16-14 loss on the Bruins' home court. Bellevue is 1-3 with its win coming over No. 23 Lewis-Clark State College (Idaho).

Bulldogs debut on Max Country: Saturday marked the first-ever live Concordia sports broadcast by 104.9 Max Country. Frank Greene called play-by-play for Max Country.





CONFIDENT 'DOGS TOPPLE BELLEVUE FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1995

Aug. 25, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Bellevue 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (12)

Digs - Claire White (13)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (38)

SEWARD, Neb. – Even after being blitzed in the first set, a confident Concordia University volleyball team continued its run of dominance at home while bucking a negative trend. On Tuesday night the Bulldogs knocked off in-state Bellevue University for the first time since 1995 by way of a 17-25, 25-20, 25-21, 25-17 victory.

Paige Getz led the team in both kills (12) and blocks (seven) in helping keep Concordia together after the rough first set. Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad recovered in plenty of time to improve to 2-0 this season and 17-2 over its past 19 home matches.

"Bellevue forced us to show who we are," Mattera said. "They came out absolutely on fire in that first game, digging everything, and you could see us get a little bit frustrated. We tried to play perfectly. We just had to calm down and do what we do over and over again against a team that plays that hard and that well defensively. Really proud of our kids for learning that lesson."



Getz and company improved their hitting percentages each set, going from .061 to .136 to .205 and then a sparkling .370 to close it out. Getz struck for five of her

kills in the final set and senior outside hitter Claire White added another four.

After the match, Mattera praised White for things that won't show up in the box score.

"Claire White is pretty darn good when she's having fun," Mattera said. "Not only the way she carried us through that third game, but her leadership tonight was absolutely fabulous. That was special to watch."

White kept coming even after having nine attacks without a kill in the opening set when the Bruin back row was all over the place. Led by Rachel Wald and her four digs in the first set, Bellevue dug up 20 Bulldog attacks and outhit Concordia .313 - .061.

But the Bulldogs never panicked.

"We knew they came out hot and we also knew they weren't going to stay that way the whole entire match," Getz said. "We stayed together and really worked on playing as a team and doing what we needed to do."

Concordia again got solid production from its middles with Taylor Workman (10 kills) and Annie Friesen (eight kills) combining for 18 kills. Junior Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 35 assists for the second-straight match while chipping in 10 digs. White (13) and Jocelyn Garcia (11) also reached double figures in digs.

The Bruins (1-4), who had won 10-straight meetings with the Bulldogs dating back to Sept. 13, 1995, were paced by the 11 kills from Wald.

In getting past a perennially nationally-relevant Bellevue squad, experience and maturity proved a key factor, especially after Concordia fell behind early.

"We looked like a very mature team other than some of the missed serves," Mattera said. "We looked like a team that nothing was going to rattle us because stuff was happening that absolutely could have distracted us, could have rattled us."

Known for a powerful offense, Concordia put down 50 kills compared to 37 for Bellevue. The Bulldogs also wound up with a .182 - .077 advantage in hitting percentage.

The Bulldogs will leave Seward Wednesday evening when it begins its journey for a weekend trip to the Windy City. Concordia will play two matches on Friday and two on Saturday in Chicago.



CONCORDIA BLOWS THROUGH FIRST DAY IN WINDY CITY

Aug. 28, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Roosevelt 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (12)

Digs - Alayna Kavanaugh & Kendra Dinkel (11)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (35)

FINAL: Concordia 3, Saint Xavier 2

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (20)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (18)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (53)

CHICAGO – Powered by its veteran stars, the Concordia University volleyball team took its act to the Windy City and remained unbeaten on the young season. The Bulldogs took care of Roosevelt University (Ill.) in straight sets, 28-26, 25-17, 25-21, before a white knuckler of a five-set victory, 20-25, 25-16, 18-25, 25-18, 15-12, over host Saint Xavier University to conclude Friday's action.

With a violent right-handed swing, sophomore middle Annie Friesen sent her teammates and the group of traveling Bulldog fans into an uproar. Said setter Alayna Kavanaugh, "I screamed. It was amazing." Friesen's kill completed the 2-0 day and moved the Bulldogs to 4-0 in 2015.

"It was a difficult match because they're a really good team," Concordia head coach Scott Mattera said. "Saint Xavier is going to make some noise this year. There's no doubt about that. It was a really good early-season test for us.

"Some players really stepped up in the fifth and we had some girls tough it out today. That's a lot of volleyball in one day and we have to come back tomorrow morning."

Senior Claire White enjoyed a terrifically productive day on the attack, going for a combined 30 kills, including 20 versus Saint Xavier. After Concordia dropped the opening set to the Cougars, White dominated the second with six kills. White then slammed five more kills in the fourth.

White teamed up with junior Paige Getz for a combined 55 kills on the evening. They were spurred on by more stellar work from Kavanaugh, who sprayed around 88 assists on Friday. In the victory over Saint Xavier, Kavanaugh filled the stat sheet with 53 assists, 11 digs and seven kills.

Once again, Friesen was nails in the middle, totaling 16 kills on her 27 swings for the day. Kavanaugh made sure everyone got involved.

"We've been working hard at mixing the flow," Kavanaugh said. "And getting the ball to everyone, not just certain people. I think it's paying off."

Mattera sprinkled praise all around afterwards.

"Honestly we could mention every player who took the floor to-

night and mention some awesome things that they did," Mattera said. "Katie (Peterson) and Libby (Zagel) coming off the bench serving again; they were both well over 85 percent on ripping jumpers and that's such a big key for us. Tiegen (Skains) stepped up huge in the fifth game. Our middles really stepped up in 4 and 5. Paige had some great swings. Jocelyn (Garcia) was Jocelyn ..."

In Friday's opening match, Concordia outlasted Roosevelt in a seesaw first set and then overcame a 5-1 deficit to begin the third. Peterson blasted three-consecutive aces in the third and concluding game to lift the Bulldogs back. They finally took their first lead at 17-16 when Taylor Workman floored a Laker overpass for a kill. Skains later dropped in point No. 24 and a Roosevelt attack error resulted in match point.

Getz, who pounded a team high 12 kills versus Roosevelt, heated up in the second set with five kills during Concordia's sharpest stretch of match No. 1. Getz and the 'Dogs hit .276 compared to -.107 by Roosevelt in the second game as the Bulldogs took control of the match.

However, Roosevelt, which went 22-17 last season out of the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference, stressed the Bulldogs with a solid serve game. The Lakers (0-3) totaled 12 aces with five alone coming from Marissa Minturn.

Saint Xavier, another Chicagoland member, got its most efficient work from Meghan Falsey (16 kills on 32 swings). The Cougars dropped to 2-2 overall.

Defensively, dig numbers were well spread out among Bulldogs. Friday's dig leaders were: Garcia (27), Kendra Dinkel (24), Kavanaugh (24) and White (21).

Concordia is off to a 4-0 start for the second time in three seasons. The 2005 Bulldogs hold the program record for most consecutive wins to begin a season. They went on an 18-0 run before falling Sept. 17 of that year.

The Bulldogs continue from the Windy City on Saturday with matches slated for 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. CT inside De Vos Gymnasium on the Trinity Christian College campus. Concordia will take on the University of Saint Francis (Ill.) (0-0) before challenging host Trinity Christian (1-3) to conclude the Chicago trip.





CHICAGO DAWGS CONCLUDE ROAD TRIP WITH UNBLEMISHED MARK

Aug. 29, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Saint Francis (Ill.) 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (12)

Digs - Alayna Kavanaugh (14)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (40)

FINAL: Concordia 3, Trinity Christian 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz and Tiegen Skains (9)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (11)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (29)



CHICAGO – For the first time since 2005, the Concordia University volleyball team has raced out to a 6-0 start. On Saturday the Bulldogs completed a 4-0 Windy City road trip by taking care of two more Chicago-area NAIA programs. Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad made the University of Saint Francis (23-25, 25-19, 25-23, 25-20) and Trinity Christian College (25-13, 25-19, 25-16) its latest victims.

Mattera liked the way his team responded to the physical toll after fending off Saint Xavier University in a five-set match on Friday night as part of another day of back-to-back matches.

"This was kind of a toughness challenge and we passed it pretty well," Mattera said. "Saint Francis is a nice team. They're really well coached. They have a really good history. They play defense. If you saw the Bellevue match, you saw the Saint Francis match. They blitzed us in the first game and we realized our pressure needs time to take over and eventually it did."

The day opened with the Bulldogs shaking off a first-set loss for the second-straight outing on the way to victory in Saturday's morning affair. Concordia's powerful style proved too much and wore down Saint Francis. Four different Bulldog attackers

floored 10 or more kills: Claire White (12), Annie Friesen (10), Paige Getz (10) and Taylor Workman (10).

Her 20 kills on Saturday gave White an even 50 for the weekend. Her leadership again proved a key factor in Concordia winning for the third time this season after dropping the opening set.

"The first one was ugly," White said. "We just knew it was going to be one of those day two, just get through it, we've been here a long time (things). We were doing what we knew how to do, nothing fancy, and just sticking with it."

The Saints took the first set after giving back a lead as large as eight points (16-8). While Saint Francis got 14 kills from Shelby Kupferschmid, the Bulldogs countered with their usual balanced attack and limited the Saints to sub-.150 attack percentages in each of the final three sets. Setter Alayna Kavanaugh sparked the defensive effort with a team high 14 digs to go along with her 40 assists.

At any hint of trouble in the early season, Concordia has quickly righted the ship.

"Volleyball is such a momentum sport," Mattera said. "One of the biggest keys is how you react to your mistakes. Do you move on and score the next point? All weekend you didn't see many runs against us. We came back from our mistakes very well and that's the mark of a mature team."

In the final match of the trip, Concordia overwhelmed defending National Christian College Athletic Association national champion Trinity Christian. Getz's nine kills topped a group of eight Bulldogs with at least one kill. Concordia posted a .367 hitting percentage while stifling the Trolls, who hit .013. The lopsided victory allowed Mattera to use 14 players. On the other hand, injury-ridden Trinity Christian employed just eight individuals.

Workman needed only nine swings to amass her eight kills on the Troll homecourt. Defensively, Jocelyn Garcia dug up 11 attacks and Annie Friesen totaled three blocks in addition to her six kills.

After taking care of business on Saturday, the Bulldogs enjoyed dinner at Giordano's. The weekend stay also included a boat ride along the Chicago River, a stroll around downtown sites (including 'The Bean'), musical scores in the vans and several other meals at Windy City staples.

"We've just had a lot of funny moments, a lot of fun times," White said. "I think last night's game was the best we've played, but we've had a lot of fun in the van rides."

The Bulldogs break until hosting the Bulldog Bash Sept. 4-5 inside Walz Arena. Concordia will welcome a trio of opponents for the weekend: Benedictine College (Kan.), Bethel College (Kan.) and York College.



BENEDICTINE HALTS UNBEATEN RUN

Sept. 4 2015

FINAL: Bethany 3, Concordia 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (15)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (15)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (41)

SEWARD, Neb. – The Concordia University volleyball team entered its latest outing with a mark of 17-2 over its previous 19 home matches while sporting an unblemished 6-0 overall record in 2015. Visiting Benedictine College (Kan.) didn't seem to notice. On Friday evening the Ravens came from behind for a 17-25, 25-23, 27-25, 26-24 victory over the host Bulldogs.

The loss also ended a streak of 14-straight non-conference home wins for Concordia volleyball. The most recent out-of-league loss inside Walz Arena prior to Friday came on Aug. 25, 2010.

"It wasn't our night. That's all there was to it," said fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera. "We didn't deal well with the circumstances. We pride ourselves on being a mature team that plays with confidence. Down the stretch we just didn't make a number of plays that they did. Kudos to Benedictine. They played a great match."

The Ravens (2-3), led by third-year head coach Erin Cooper, raised their level of play for a Bulldog squad receiving votes in the national poll. Benedictine called upon outside hitter Taylor Fortner (13 kills) in particular. The 5-foot-10 freshman floored six kills in game 3 and then another three in game 4. Fortner brought her team to a victorious uproar when she blocked a Taylor Workman attack for match point.

On the other side of the net, the Bulldogs hurt themselves with 16 service errors. In addition, senior Claire White did not take a single swing on the attack. Due to pain in her ankle, White played in the back row only and dug up 14 attacks.

Benedictine won despite being out-hit .223 – .160 and having 15 fewer kills (60-45) than Concordia. The Ravens used a superior serve receive game and turned the tide in the second set after digging an 11-7 hole. Sara Rahmanzai spurred the rally with a block. Benedictine eventually took a 17-16 lead and ran off five of the second set's final six points to grab momentum.

Rahmanzai and Fortner wreaked plenty of havoc in the front row, combining for 8.5 total team blocks.

"They mix it up well," Mattera said. "They run stuff really fast.

Their serve receive was fantastic tonight. They were able to spread it out and run their fast stuff and we didn't react properly. We knew they were a good team coming in."

Sophomore middle Annie Friesen enjoyed another big match, going for 15 kills on 28 swings. Three other Bulldogs also reached double figures in kills: freshman Jenna Habegger (11) and juniors Paige Getz (10) and Alayna Kavanaugh (10). Kavanaugh also contributed 41 assists and 14 digs. Sophomore Jocelyn Garica topped the team with 15 digs.

The Bulldogs return to action on Saturday when they host Bethel College (Kan.) (2-4) at 10 a.m. and York College (2-5) at 5 p.m. as part of the Bulldog Bash inside Walz Arena. The event includes four varsity matches and three junior varsity matches all on Saturday. JV contests will be held in the PE Building gym.





BULLDOGS GETZ BACK ON TRACK

Sept. 5, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Bethel 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (18)

Digs - Kendra Dinkel (7)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (39)

FINAL: Concordia 3, York 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (20)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (23)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (42)

SEWARD, Neb. – With Claire White sidelined, junior outside hitter Paige Getz killed it on Saturday. The native of Paola, Kan., amassed 38 kills in a pair of victories as part of the Bulldog Bash which saw Concordia defeat Bethel College (Kan.), 25-14, 25-14, 25-14, and York College, 22-25, 25-9, 25-14, 25-20, inside Walz Arena.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad improved to 8-1 overall and 19-3 over its last 22 home matches. The only disappointment on Saturday was the team's approach to the opening set versus York.

"Lesson learned," Mattera said. "We're still trying to figure some things out. Nobody we've played against is a slouch. You saw how York played against Benedictine. They absolutely pushed them. We just came out flat. We reacted well to the challenge and stepped up."

With Getz pelting bullets over the net, Concordia made quick work of Bethel in Saturday's morning match. Getz committed just one error and needed only 26 attacks to produce a then career high 18 kills. Her powerful swings helped make up for the absence of White, a 2014 first team all-conference selection.

Getz felt a sense of responsibility to maximize her production without the services of White as well as senior Kelsey Dinkel.

"We lost one of our main leaders so I just felt like I should step up and take her place," Getz said.

The duo of Getz and Tiegen Skains (12 kills) combined for 30 kills on 43 swings in the domination of the Threshers. The play of the dynamic duo led to Concordia hitting better than .400 in all three sets. It topped out at .571 in the second. On the other side, Bethel managed to hit only .056.

In the middle, sophomore Annie Friesen put together another dominant day, going for 24 kills on 37 total attacks. She

attacked at a .500 clip in the first match and then hit a blistering .560 in the second. She was just one of the beneficiaries of the precision passing of junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh, who racked up 81 assists over Saturday's seven sets.

Kavanaugh quarterbacked the Bulldog offense to an especially impressive second set versus York when Concordia hit .773 and finished 17 points on kills alone. Once again, Getz was unstoppable. She went off for 20 kills to burn the Panthers for another career best figure.

"She's got some numbers this week," Mattera said. "We sat down with her ahead of today and said look, 'with Claire on the sideline, you're going to have to step up.' She absolutely accepted that challenge."

Defensively, Friesen and sophomore Jocelyn Garcia made life tough on York. Friesen totaled seven block assists and Garcia ran down nearly everything in the back row. She ended up with 23 digs of Panther attacks.

Following Saturday's action, Friesen's season hitting percentage stands at an eye-popping .479. Getz pushed her season kill total to a team high 111.

The Bulldogs open up conference play on Wednesday when they host No. 22 Hastings (6-2). The Broncos own a pair of wins over top 25 opponents: No. 13 Davenport University (Mich.) and No. 23 Lewis-Clark State College (Idaho). Last season Concordia won two of three meetings with Hastings, including both matchups played inside Walz Arena.

"We're ready," Getz said. "We're hoping there'll be a lot of people in here."





KAVANAUGH, WHITE HEROIC IN DOWNING NO. 19 HASTINGS

Sept. 9, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Hastings 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (16)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (17)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (35)

SEWARD, Neb. – Up against the GPAC's premier blocking team, Concordia junior Alayna Kavanaugh surfaced with the most significant denial of the night. Sliding over from her spot on right side of the front row, Kavanaugh threw up a wall for match point. The play sent a vibrant blackout Walz crowd home happy as the Bulldogs rode a wave of early momentum to a 25-19, 25-13, 27-25 victory over No. 19 Hastings on Wednesday night to open up the conference season.

The contest marked Concordia's third-straight home meeting with the perennially strong Bronco program that resulted in a win. Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad moved to 9-1, 1-0 GPAC on the year and 20-3 over its last 23 home matches.

"We played as well as we're probably capable of right now in those first two games," Mattera said. "We talked about it in the break though, Hastings is a good team. They're really good. They're top 20 for a reason. We knew they would come out in the third and play better, and they did."

"We had to fight back in that third and I thought we showed a lot of heart with that."

After a rough second set for the visitors, the Broncos (7-3, 0-1 GPAC) held leads of 14-11 and 23-21 in the third game. Enter senior Claire White. Making her return after sitting out on Saturday, White pounded point Nos. 23, 25 and 26 of the third set to prep the stage for Kavanaugh's massive block. Said Mattera, "That might be the best block in my four years here."

Kavanaugh slid to the floor after recording her only block of the night. Her teammates quickly surrounded her in jubilation as the crowd roared.

The highlight play completed an impressive performance against a Hastings squad that had already defeated three top 25 opponents this season. The Bulldogs outthit the Broncos, .296 – .107 and crushed 14 more kills (44-30).

Captained by Kavanaugh at setter, Concordia effectively hit around the GPAC's leading blocking team for most of the night. Kavanaugh dished out 35 assists with many peppered in the direction of White and fellow outside hitter Paige Getz.

White finished with a match high 16 kills (six in the third set)

while hitting a dazzling .481. Getz backed her with 12 kills on 29 attempts. Tiegen Skains also had a productive outing from the right side – eight kills and a .438 hitting percentage.

"Everybody had an on night tonight," White said. "It's really awesome to see what happens when we're all playing well together like that."



Concordia really got rolling in the second set when it demoralized Hastings with eight-straight points that brought the crowd into a frenzy. Concordia led 22-10 at one point and hit .423 for the set. The stanza included plenty of crowd-pleasing floor burners, particularly from White, who had six of her kills during the second set.

Hastings finally found some traction in the third set when Sage Meyer's kill off an overpass provided a 6-3 Bronco advantage and forced a Bulldog timeout. That momentum eventually ran dry. Meyer ended up with more errors (nine) than kills (eight).

Defensively, Jocelyn Garcia led the way with 17 digs. She also added two aces and did not make a single error on serve receive. The Bulldogs had only one reception error the entire evening.

Concordia has now won three of the past four meetings overall with Hastings. Prior to that stretch, the Broncos had won 13-straight contests against the Bulldogs.

White and company felt like they had something to prove in the latest win over their conference rival. Concordia had moved back one spot in this week's official GPAC rankings.

Said White, "I think that motivated us a lot."

Concordia returns to nonconference action at this weekend's Hastings College Classic. On Friday the Bulldogs will take on MidAmerica Nazarene University (Kan.) (7-5) at 1 p.m. and then Montana Western University (3-4) at 5 p.m. Concordia will also play two more neutral matches in Hastings on Saturday.



MIGHTY ATTACK DRIVES VOLLEYBALL TO 9-1 START

By Jake Knabel, Director of Athletic Communications

Prove it. That's essentially the message delivered to the Concordia University volleyball team that found itself positioned sixth in the GPAC rankings despite an 8-1 record entering the week. Prove it is exactly what the Bulldogs and their powerful offensive attack did on Wednesday night against No. 19 Hastings.

The victory over a top-20 opponent validated the legitimacy of a budding program that already appeared to have established itself last season. With one hiccup against Benedictine College being the exception, Concordia has been dominant, wiping out opponents with one of the nation's most efficient and crowd-roaring attacks.

It's no wonder the student body has embraced these Bulldogs. They play fast and they end points quickly. Consider that, among all NAIA teams, the Bulldogs rank fourth in kills per game (14.1), sixth in assists per game (12.9) and sixth in hitting percentage (.281).

With returning first team all-conference setter Alayna Kavanaugh at the controls, the Bulldogs hit .296 versus a Bronco squad that had already played five top 25 teams (3-2 in those matches) and had limited its opponents to a collective .152 hitting percentage behind stonewalling blockers.

Said Mattera after defeating Hastings in straight sets, "When you go up against a team that's that good of a blocking team and we don't get blocked that often - huge props to Alayna. She was mixing it beautifully. It really kept them off balance."

Even more encouraging, senior outside hitter Claire White played like an

All-American on Wednesday after sitting out for two wins on Sept. 5. She didn't simply just amass statistics (match high 16 kills), she floored the big tallies, including point Nos. 23, 25 and 26 as the Bulldogs rallied back in the third set.

When White was sidelined, opponents still had to deal with junior outside Paige Getz, who is enjoying her best season. She leads the Bulldogs with 123 kills after a monster weekend that netted her Bulldog Booster Club Athlete of the Week recognition.

Not enough firepower, you say? Well there's also Tieggen Skains (72 kills, 2.0 kills/set) on the right side, Annie Friesen (.455 hitting percentage) in the middle and a host of other options. Fall asleep and Kavanaugh will dump one into the corner for a kill of her own.

"We've been working really hard at mixing the flow and getting the ball to everyone, not just certain people," said Kavanaugh after a pair of wins in Chicago on Aug. 28. "I think it's paying off."

On Wednesday five different players attempted nine attacks or more. Aware of where the hot hands were located, Kavanaugh went to the outsides most often where White and Getz delivered a combined 28 kills on 56 swings. For the first time all season, Friesen hit below .316 in a match. But with this depth, everyone is allowed an off night.

"It's awesome right now," White said in a postgame interview with Max Country radio on Wednesday. "It's easy to play together when you're up like that, but I think as a team we fight really well and we come back really well together. We have it figured out right now."

The togetherness of an experienced squad has helped produce four wins over ranked opponents since the beginning of the 2014 season. During that time, the Bulldogs are 3-1 versus Hastings, 2-0 versus Doane and 1-0 versus Dordt. However, they are currently looking up at all three in the conference and national polls. "I think that motivated us a lot," White said.

Walz is rocking again, mammoth Bulldog kills are pelting the floorboards and there are plenty of feel good vibes to go around, but most of the goals set by this program are still out there. Concordia volleyball last captured a conference title in 2000 and last cracked the national top 25 in 2001.

"It was our first GPAC game of the year and it feels like that was hard work," White said. "But we have a lot more to go."





DAWGS SPLIT PAIR OF NONCONFERENCE MATCHES IN HASTINGS

Sept. 11, 2015

FINAL: MidAmerica Nazarene 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (15)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (12)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (34)

FINAL: Concordia 3, Montana Western 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz and Annie Friesen (10)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (18)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (35)

HASTINGS, Neb. – Fresh off its biggest win this season, the Concordia University volleyball team returned to action and split a pair of matches on Friday at the Five Points Bank Invitational hosted by Hastings College. After falling in a competitive straight-sets decision, 27-25, 25-22, 27-25, to MidAmerica Nazarene University (Kan.), the Bulldogs responded with a 25-16, 25-20, 25-20 victory over Montana Western University in an evening tilt.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad moved to 10-2 overall. Last season Concordia waited until Sept. 20 to record its 10th win of the campaign.



"The first match we played OK, but just not well enough to beat a team that good," Mattera said. "We probably brought our 'B' game. If you're relying on breaks to go your way, it's not enough against teams like that. We didn't play poorly, just not good enough to win."

"We came out fast against Montana Western. That's a great defensive team. They just dug balls all night. We had to keep bringing it and bringing it. It got frustrating at times, but we handled it pretty well. They beat us in Hastings at last year's tournament. It was one we had marked down and wanted to go out and get them this year."

Coming off a monster night in Wednesday's triumph over No. 19 Hastings on Wednesday, senior Claire White floored a combined 23 kills on Friday. Meanwhile, sophomore Annie Friesen emerged as the biggest star in the win over Montana Western (3-6). She racked up 10 kills and seven total blocks from her spot in the middle. Friesen led a stifling front row defense that totaled 11 blocks in the evening match.

Concordia seized early momentum by tallying the first five points of the match against Montana Western, a member of the NAIA's Frontier Conference. Also nicknamed the Bulldogs, the foe from Big Sky Country hit only .070 for the evening and did not attack at a clip higher than .167 in any individual set.

Junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh (69 assists on Friday) kept Montana Western off balance by dishing the ball from pin to pin. Four Bulldogs had between seven and 10 kills in the win: Paige Getz (10), Friesen (10), White (eight) and Tiegan Skains (seven).

When Friday's opponents hit around Concordia blockers, sophomore defensive specialist Jocelyn Garcia cleaned up in the back row. She averaged five digs per set on the day by totaling 12 and 18 digs, respectively, in the two matches. She also dumped in two aces in both contests.

MidAmerica Nazarene (8-5), affiliated with the Heart of America Athletic Conference, entered this week listed among "others receiving votes," just like Concordia. The Pioneers picked up their eighth win of the season on the strength of 12 kills from Sofija Berezovska and 11 from Gisele Silva. MidAmerica Nazarene outhit Concordia, .243 to .192.

The Bulldogs continue action from the Five Points Bank Invitational at Hastings on Saturday when they take on Carroll College (Mont.) (3-6) at 1 p.m. and No. 20 Montana Tech University (12-5) at 5 p.m.

"We're testing our toughness and we're going up against some real good teams," Mattera said. "This is the type of competition we need to play. We can definitely win matches at this level and that's the next step in the development of the program."



FRIESEN HAS CAREER MATCH IN BULLDOGS' 1-1 DAY

Sept. 12, 2015

FINAL: Carroll (Mont.) 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Tiegen Skains (11)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (13)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (33)

FINAL: Concordia 3, Montana Tech 2

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (17)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (27)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (57)

HASTINGS, Neb. – The Concordia University volleyball team played two matches Saturday, Sept. 12 at the Five Points Bank Invitational at Hastings College. In the first match, the Bulldogs dropped three very close sets, 23-25, 29-31 and 22-25 to Carroll College (Mont.) who is now 5-7 on the year. The Bulldogs conquered their second five set match of the day when they faced No. 20 Montana Tech, three sets to two, 25-21, 17-25, 25-21, 24-26 and 15-12. Montana Tech falls to 12-5 on the year. Annie Friesen broke her career record in kills in a single match of 16 in the victory over the Diggers. The sophomore killed 17 of her 27 attempts with just two errors.

Head coach Scott Mattera said on the day, "Overall, I'm really happy with how we played. It was basically a mere image of yesterday. We played some of our best volleyball but it just wasn't enough to beat those two teams. We found the energy to win a close and important game against a ranked team. There were lots of long rallies in that game. There was a lot of heart on both sides of the net to win. This was a big team building win for us."

In the match versus Carroll, team statistics were even across the board. Concordia led in kills (42-41), attacks (126-117) and in assists (37-36) while Carroll edged the Bulldogs in blocks (4-3) and hitting percentage (.197-.143). In digs, the squads were even at 46 apiece.

The balanced quality of the match carried into individual statistics for the Bulldogs. Kills for the 'Dogs were spread out in a horizontal way as well. Tiegen Skains (11), Friesen (10), Claire White (8) and Paige Getz (7) topped the Bulldogs in kills for the match. Alayna Kavanaugh recorded two kills herself and dished out 33 assists. Defensively, Jocelyn Garcia dug the ball up 13 times while Kendra Dinkel put up 11 digs for Concordia.

A very back and forth match between Concordia and No. 20 Montana Tech played out in the Bulldogs' favor. CUNE won every other set in the victory. Highlighted by Friesen's career high 17

kills, the Bulldogs hit .192 as a team. Garcia also set a career high in digs with 27. The sophomore's previous mark was 23 digs in a match vs. York earlier this season. Skains was able to tie her season high of 12 kills while Taylor Workman set her season high at 14 kills. Kavanaugh set up a season high 57 assists.



On Friesen's career day Mattera noted, "Annie did amazing. Before the game we were talking and I said if she could stay off the net she would have a ton more opportunities and that's just what she did. Taylor did awesome with that also. Teams choose what to take away from us and they really tried to shut down our outsides, so we attacked more on the right side. It's really good to see the team work together like that. Alayna did a really good job of setting the ball up to them and allowing them to do so well today."

As a team the Bulldogs totaled 70 kills on 193 attacks, both well over the Diggers' totals of 44 kills and 150 attacks. The Diggers had the advantage on the Bulldogs in blocks 13-8, one of the only categories that the team led in.

Mattera said on the upcoming match against Doane, "Doane is a top 25 team and they've earned it. It's going to make the rivalry that already exists that much better. We're looking forward to working on some things in the gym to prepare for them."

Concordia is now 11-3 on the season as they resume GPAC play this upcoming week. The Lady 'Dogs will be back in action to play at Doane College. The match is slated for Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 7:30 p.m. in Crete, Neb.



BULLDOGS STIFLE NO. 24 DOANE IN ROAD DOMINATION

Sept. 16, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Doane 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen, Paige Getz and Tiegen Skains (10)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (17)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (37)

CRETE, Neb. – For the third time in eight days, the Concordia University volleyball team made a victim out of a nationally-ranked opponent. Unfazed by an energetic Haddix Center on the Doane College campus, the Bulldogs used a razor-sharp performance to knock off the 24th-ranked Tigers, 25-20, 25-19, 25-15, in a match that lasted less than 80 minutes on Wednesday night.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad got the signature road victory it sought and improved to 12-3 overall and 2-0 in conference play.

The Bulldogs used a second-straight big performance from sophomore middle Annie Friesen (10 kills, .526 hitting percentage) and a yeoman's defensive effort that suffocated host Doane (10-5, 1-1 GPAC). There was plenty of additional praise to go around. Junior



Tiegen Skains pounded 10 kills on 15 attempts and Jocelyn Garcia tracked down 17 attacks in the back row.

For any Bulldog opponent, each match results in a game of pick your poison. Pinch the middle and you risk allowing Skains, Paige Getz and Claire White have a field day on the out-sides.

"She was a monster," Mattera said of Skains' night. "We know she's capable of that. What are you going to do? Give up our middles or give up our outsides? OK, Tiegen's got you. When we're in system, that's a lot of options."

So flustered was Doane by the end of the night that it managed to have more attack errors (five) than kills (four) in the final set. The Bulldogs bulldozed the Tigers with statistical advantages of 45-21 in kills, 43-28 in digs and .268 to .035 in hitting percentage.

"We just went out and played lights out," Skains said. "Nobody was really worried about a whole lot. It was fun to play tonight. We were all comfortable."

Concordia tamed the Tigers during an impressive run of nine-straight points that turned a 3-3 tie into a 12-3 lead in the second set. Friesen started the point binge with three quick kills and then punctuated it with a block that set off her signature rock star-like celebration. Doane clawed back within 23-19 before a Taylor Workman kill and Tiger attack error put the Bulldogs in command.

Garcia, a native of Brighton, Colo., again cleaned up in the back row while teaming with White (nine digs) and Kendra Dinkel (seven digs). Concordia's depth extends beyond its wealth of powerful hitters.

"You can depend on anybody," Garcia said. "No matter who's back there, everyone's going to take care of their jobs. It's not just one person."

A significant shift in momentum occurred with Concordia leading 18-17 in the first set. A Doane player who tried to drop in a sneaky kill was called for a lift. On the next rally, White pounded a missile of a kill that handcuffed a backrow Tiger. Doane called timeout, but Concordia rode that high to an early 1-0 advantage.

Concordia now owns wins over No. 19 Hastings, No. 20 Montana Tech and No. 24 Doane. The Bulldogs have won each of the last three meetings (two on the road) with Doane, which fell to 1-1 this season at home.

Getz equaled Friesen and Skains with a match high 10 kills. Alayna Kavanaugh tossed up 40 assists. White chipped in five kills and three aces and was perfect on serve receive. The Tigers were led by six kills from Breanna Fye.

The Bulldogs will be back on the road on Saturday when they take on first-year GPAC member College of Saint Mary (8-4, 1-1 GPAC) at 1 p.m. Immediately after, Concordia will play a non-conference match against Waldorf College (Iowa) (4-12) at 3 p.m. Both contests will be held inside Lied Fitness Center on the College of Saint Mary campus.



RED-HOT DAWGS TAKE TWO IN OMAHA

Sept. 19, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, College of Saint Mary 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (14)
Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (18)
Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (50)

FINAL: Concordia 3, Waldorf 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Taylor Workman (8)
Digs - Claire White (16)
Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (35)

OMAHA, Neb. – Fresh off its third win of the season over a top 25 opponent, the Concordia University volleyball team sizzled on Saturday afternoon, winning a pair of matches on the College of Saint Mary campus in Omaha. The Bulldogs began the day with a 25-13, 21-25, 25-21, 25-19 win over the host Flames and capped it by throttling Waldorf College (Iowa), 25-16, 25-8, 25-9.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad bumped its winning streak to three and improved to 14-3 overall, including a perfect 3-0 conference mark.

The day's opening match marked the first time Concordia and College of Saint Mary have gone head-to-head as conference opponents.

"The match against CSM was really up and down," Mattera said. "We had some serve receive and connection inconsistency and they dug a lot of balls against us. We almost won too easily in the first and we let up a bit. You can't do that against a high momentum team like CSM."

Junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 50 assists, helping four different Bulldogs reach double figures in kills in the victory over the Flames. Sophomore Annie Friesen powered 14 kills from the middle. She was followed in that department by Tiegen Skains (11), Paige Getz (11) and Claire White (10).

Concordia used a .258 to .100 hitting percentage advantage to earn its third-straight GPAC win. Jocelyn Garcia dug up 18 attacks. White (15 digs) and Kelsey Dinkel (10 digs) were also instrumental in the Bulldog defensive effort that allowed Mattera's squad to avenge its 2014 road loss to College of Saint Mary.

The Flames (8-5, 1-2 GPAC), who own a conference win over Nebraska Wesleyan, got a solid match from Elaine Kramer (12 kills on 27 swings).

In a contest that followed immediately after inside the Lied Fitness Center, Concordia wiped out the Warriors, a member of the North Star Athletic Association, by hitting .527. Skains

completed a productive day by burning Waldorf for eight kills on nine attempts.

"The second match against Waldorf was much cleaner," Mattera said. "They are a better team than we allowed them to look today. Our constant pressure really took its toll!"

Again, Kavanaugh (35 assists) made use of her wealth of options. Skains was one of many with eye-popping attack percentages. White went for eight kills on 10 swings. Taylor Workman pounded nine kills on 15 attempts. Friesen had six on 10 attacks. Defensively, White had 16 digs to top all players.

In service, three different Bulldogs dropped in four aces on the day: Katie Peterson, White and Libby Zigel.

Concordia is 3-0 to begin GPAC play for the first time since 2005. The '05 Bulldogs began the season with 18-consecutive wins overall.

Concordia now looks ahead to a challenging week that includes matches against No. 4 Midland (15-0, 2-0 GPAC) and No. 11 Northwestern (14-2, 3-0 GPAC). The Bulldogs host the Warriors at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Mattera's squad has won each of its first three matches versus ranked foes.





VOLLEYBALL CRACKS NATIONAL TOP 25 FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2001

SEWARD, Neb. – The Concordia University volleyball team has made a long awaited return to the national rankings. On Tuesday the Bulldogs checked in at No. 18 in the Tachikara-NAIA Volleyball Coaches’ Top 25 Poll. Previously, the program’s most recent national ranking came via the 2001 preseason poll that placed Concordia 20th.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera’s squad had been listed among “others receiving votes” in each of this season’s first three polls released by the NAIA. A year ago the Bulldogs were the first team out of the top 25 in the poll released on Sept. 30.

The national ranking adds sizzle to Wednesday’s 7:30 p.m. match-up in which Concordia welcomes undefeated and fourth-ranked Midland (15-0, 2-0 GPAC) to Walz Arena. The last time Concordia played host for a battle between ranked volleyball combatants occurred on Sept. 20, 2000, when No. 9 Peru State College defeated the 13th-ranked Bulldogs, 13-15, 15-13, 15-5, 15-12, in Seward.

Concordia will also play at No. 11 Northwestern (15-3, 3-0 GPAC) on Saturday as part of a challenging week. The Bulldogs (14-3, 3-0 GPAC) own three wins this season over top 25 opponents: No. 19 Hastings, No. 20 Montana Tech and No. 24 Doane.

The 2000 GPAC championship team coached by Becky Ernstmeyer Loewe made regular appearances in the top 25. The Bulldogs were included in seven of 10 polls that season, climbing as high as 12th and finishing at No. 18. They concluded the season at 23-13 overall (9-1 GPAC).

The volleyball program is promoting a “redneck” theme for Wednesday’s home match. Fans are encouraged to wear redneck attire.

NAIA volleyball top 25 poll

1	Biola (Calif.) (16)	12-0	
2	Viterbo (Wis.) (4)	13-0	
3	Missouri Baptist	14-1	
4	Midland (Neb.)	15-0	
5	Lindsey Wilson (Ky.)	14-3	
6	Rocky Mountain (Mont.)	12-4	
7	Eastern Oregon	11-1	
8	Southern Oregon	13-0	
9	Evangel (Mo.)	16-0	
10	Vanguard (Calif.)	9-4	
11	Northwestern (Iowa)	14-3	
12	Columbia (Mo.)	10-4	
13	Coastal Georgia	13-1	
14	Dordt (Iowa)		11-1
15	Madonna (Mich.)	12-3	
16	Westmont (Calif.)	11-2	
17	Georgetown (Ky.)	12-2	
18	Concordia (Neb.)	14-3	
19	Park (Mo.)	7-4	
20	Wayland Baptist (Texas)	13-3	
T21	Montana Tech	13-6	
T21	Hastings (Neb.)	10-6	
23	MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)	11-6	
24	Doane (Neb.)	10-6	
25	The Master’s (Calif.)	11-5	





NO. 18 CONCORDIA FALLS TO UNBEATEN MIDLAND

Sept. 23, 2015

FINAL: Midland 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (9)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (21)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (22)

SEWARD, Neb. – A day after receiving the program's first national ranking since 2001, the Concordia University volleyball team faced its stiffest challenge yet in 2015. The eighteenth-ranked Bulldogs succumbed to undefeated and fourth-ranked Midland, 25-20, 26-24, 25-18, inside a charged up Walz Arena on Wednesday night.

The Warriors (16-0, 3-0 GPAC) remained perfect in a matchup that paired Concordia's powerful offensive attack (No. 1 in the NAIA in kills per game) with one of the nation's most fearsome blocking front walls.

"Midland's a really good team," Bulldog head coach Scott Mattera said. "They passed really well tonight. They won the serve and pass battle. That's all there was to it. We had them in game 2, we just didn't play well at the net. We had a chance and we didn't make the plays."

Visiting Midland rarely allowed Concordia (14-4, 3-1 GPAC) the opportunity to feed off the sizeable 'redneck' crowd inside Walz. With reigning GPAC attacker of the week Priscilla O'Dowd (13 kills, six total blocks) roaming the middle, the Warriors held the Bulldogs to a .058 hitting percentage – well below their season clip of .262 entering the night.

After dropping the first set, Concordia let an opportunity to even up the match slip away. The Bulldogs grabbed a 20-18 lead on the strength of a Libby Zagel ace and an Annie Friesen kill. They then regained a two-point advantage (24-22) with Paige Getz's kill. That's when the Warriors showed resolve, rallying back with four-consecutive kills, including the last two by Katie Thomas to take the air out of the building.

Concordia recovered and held leads of 14-8 and 15-9 in the third set as Getz hammered three kills during the run. The Warriors proceeded to go on a soul-crushing 11-2 splurge that included six Bulldog attack errors. Oftentimes when it appeared Concordia had found an opening on the opposite side of the court, Darcy Barry (19 digs) and the Warriors kept it alive.

Only one Bulldog attacker managed to hit above .100. Sophomore middle Annie Friesen, who entered the contest ranked No. 1 in the NAIA in hitting percentage, topped Concordia with nine kills

and a .273 percentage. Sophomore defensive specialist Jocelyn Garcia, the GPAC defensive player of the week, again produced in the back row with a match high 21 digs. Getz and Tiegen Skains chipped in six kills apiece.

Midland, No. 5 in the NAIA in blocks per set (2.74), added 11 more denials on Wednesday. Head coach Paul Giesselman regularly employs a front row of players 6-foot or greater in stature such as O'Dowd, Ashlee Harms (6-0) and Jordan Lempka (6-2).

Wednesday's match marked the first time that Concordia University played host to a match between nationally-ranked squads since Sept. 20, 2000. On that date the 13th-ranked Bulldogs were defeated by No. 9 Peru State in four sets. This year's Concordia squad is now 3-1 versus top 25 foes.

The Bulldogs continue a challenging week on Saturday when they play at No. 11 Northwestern (16-3, 4-0 GPAC) on Saturday. First serve is set for 3 p.m. from Orange City, Iowa.





NO. 18 BULLDOGS DOWN NO. 11 RED RAIDERS IN FIVE

Sept. 26, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Northwestern 2

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Tiegen Skains (14)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (14)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (43)

ORANGE CITY, Iowa – The No. 18 Concordia volleyball team defeated GPAC foe No. 11 Northwestern College on Saturday, Sept. 26 in five sets (19-25, 26-24, 24-26, 25-19, 15-9). The Bulldogs took the second, fourth and fifth sets in the match, hitting .333 in the last set.

“Wow, what a match,” head coach Scott Mattera said on the win. “It really had everything both good and bad for both teams, but the most important thing it had was huge heart and toughness from these Bulldogs. We had so many chances to give in but they just fought back every time. This place has been a place of nightmares for us over the years so to pull this one out against No. 11 in the country is awfully special.”

Five different Bulldogs had at least seven kills in the match with three in double digits. Tiegen Skains led with 14 kills and hit .370. Taylor Workman and Annie Friesen each contributed 10 kills. Claire White tallied eight kills while Paige Getz marked up seven kills.

Mattera said, “Tiegen was flat out unstoppable today. So many of her kills were highlight reel type but it was her shot selection that impressed me most. Taylor had a huge match as well making great decisions turn the ball around the blocks. Kudos to our serve receive as well. It started off really rough but they really got it going as the match went on.”

Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 43 assists, served up three aces and recorded four kills. Libero Jocelyn Garcia dug up a team leading 14 attacks while Kendra Dinkel marked up 10 digs.

As a team, Concordia hit .187 to the Red Raiders .125. The Bulldogs also out killed Northwestern College, 54-46. Blocks for the two squads were equal at eight apiece.

The No. 18 Concordia volleyball team improves to 15-4 (4-1

GPAC) on the season while No. 11 Northwestern drops to 16-4 (4-1 GPAC).

Slated next for the Bulldogs is the last non-conference match of the season vs Central Christian College. The match will be at Walz Arena on Tuesday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m.





DAWGS SHOW OFF DEPTH IN NONCONFERENCE ROUT

Sept, 29, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Central Christian College 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (9)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (11)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (21)



SEWARD, Neb. – The 18th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team showed no signs of a letdown three days following a momentous five-set win at No. 11 Northwestern. The Bulldogs hit .545 in the opening set and cruised to a 25-8, 25-11, 25-8 win over visiting Central Christian College (Kan.) inside Walz Arena on Tuesday night.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad concluded the nonconference portion with its demolition of the NAIA Independent foe and now sits at 16-4 overall. Concordia has won 21 of its last 25 home matches.

In the latest victory, seven different Bulldogs registered at least one kill as they outthit the Tigers, .394 to -.122, in a match that lasted just 58 minutes.

"No complaints about that," Mattera said. "We spread it out pretty well and everyone had some good decision making shot-wise. I also really liked the way Libby (Zagel) ran the show in the third game. It gave Alayna (Kavanaugh) a little break there and Libby does such a good job for us every day in practice."

Concordia finished off an utterly dominant evening by rattling off the first eight points of the third set as Zagel replaced Kavanaugh as setter. On her birthday, junior right side Tiegen Skains pulverized one of the match's most thunderous attacks, leaving the Tiger half of the court helpless as part of the third set onslaught.

Central Christian never disrupted the Bulldog rhythm nor could the Tigers handle a powerful opposing serve game (nine Concordia aces). Central Christian had nine more errors (24) than kills (15) and did not post a positive hitting percentage in any of the three sets.

The focused performance by Zagel and company immediately followed an emotional road within the conference.

"Right before the game we were just saying consistently that we needed to handle our business and treat every match like its Northwestern," Zagel said. "That's just what we did. We came in with a good mindset and delivered."

Bulldog senior Claire White topped all players with nine kills and three aces. She ran her career kill count to 905 (890 as a Bulldog; 15 for Washburn University). Six players in Concordia volleyball history have reached the 1,000-kill plateau.

The Bulldogs also got eight kills from Paige Getz (818 career kills), six from Skains, five from Annie Friesen, four from Jenna Habegger, three from Taylor Workman and one from Kavanaugh (21 assists in two sets). Sophomore Jocelyn Garcia chipped in 11 digs while Kendra Dinkel dug up seven attacks. Workman led the team's defense at the net with three block assists.

Central Christian (12-6), which also lost earlier this season to GPAC member Dakota Wesleyan, was paced by four kills apiece from Kasi Kraus and Mayuko Shono.

Mattera's squad went 10-4 for the month of September with four victories coming over top 25 opponents. A week ago the program achieved its first national ranking since 2001.

The Bulldogs continue a week heavy on home contests when they welcome Morningside (4-11, 0-5 GPAC) to Walz Arena on Friday for a 7:30 p.m. first serve. The next day Briar Cliff (9-5, 2-3 GPAC) pays a visit to Seward for a 3 p.m. match.



FIVE DIFFERENT BULLDOGS SLAM NINE OR MORE KILLS TO FUEL GPAC WIN

Oct. 2, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Morningside 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Tiegen Skains (14)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (17)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (43)

SEWARD, Neb. – Even on an ‘off’ night, the 18th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team regrouped and sharpened up by hitting .350 in the fourth and final set. The Bulldogs fought off the pesky blocking of Morningside to earn a 25-17, 21-25, 25-18, 25-16 victory over the Mustangs inside Walz Arena on Friday night.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera’s squad bumped their records to 17-4 overall and 5-1 in conference play. Concordia has now won nine of its last 11 GPAC regular-season contests and is 22-4 over its past 26 home matches.

“We played well enough to win and we’re not going to complain



about a win over Morningside,” Mattera said. “But to get out-blocked, 11-3, and to have 25 hitting errors – that’s not going to get it done. We’ll do better next time.”

Morningside used a staunch defensive effort at the net to slow down a Bulldog attack that ranks as one of the NAIA’s best (11th nationally in kills per game). The Mustangs seized momentum behind five second-set blocks, including three block assists apiece from Jennifer Buyert and Gabi French. Morningside finished with 11 total blocks and held Concordia to a .183 hitting percentage through the first three sets.

While the Mustangs (4-13, 0-7 GPAC) did impressive defensive work in the front row, they managed to floor only 35 kills compared to 56 by the Bulldogs. More than one-third of Morningside’s kills came courtesy of Buyert (13). However, the Mustangs benefited by having nine fewer combined attack/service errors than Concordia. Said Mattera, “We have to clean up a lot of the little stuff.”

It still wasn’t enough to completely stymie the Bulldogs’ bevy of skilled hitters. Five different players racked up nine kills or more. Junior Tiegen Skains crushed 14 kills, including seven during the second set. Fellow junior Paige Getz heated up with six kills in the fourth game and finished with 13 overall. Three Bulldogs recorded exactly nine kills: Annie Friesen, Claire White and Taylor Workman. They were set up by Alayna Kavanaugh’s 43 assists.

Their collective work helped overcome a spirited performance by the Mustangs, who roared back from an 8-2 deficit in the third set and led, 9-8. Aneisha Ford stifled an attack with one of her seven blocks to punctuate the run. The Bulldogs took timeout and then got on a roll. They built a 22-14 lead with a 14-5 run that left Morningside in the dust.

Concordia finished the match with a .233 to .121 advantage in hitting percentage. The Bulldog defense was led by sophomore Jocelyn Garcia, who had 17 digs. She also added a match high four aces. Friesen was in on all three of Concordia’s blocks.

Just 4-13 overall, Morningside has played an exceptionally challenging schedule. The Mustangs have suffered seven losses to ranked opponents and another at the hands of a team receiving votes in the national poll.

The Bulldogs remain at home on Saturday when they will host Briar Cliff (10-5, 3-3 GPAC) at 3 p.m. Concordia won last year’s meeting with the Chargers in five sets in Seward.



MIDDLES BLAST BRIAR CLIFF

Oct. 3, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Briar Cliff 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Taylor Workman (13)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (16)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (44)



SEWARD, Neb. – The combination of Annie Friesen and Taylor Workman had a field day against visiting Briar Cliff. The talented middles powered the 18th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team to a 25-16, 15-25, 25-19, 25-21 win over Briar Cliff inside Walz Arena on Saturday afternoon.

The victory completed a perfect 3-0 week at home for fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad, which is now 23-4 over its last 27 home matches. The Bulldogs outit the visiting Chargers, .252 to .177, in the process of moving to 18-4 overall and 6-1 in conference play.

"Overall I was really happy with the way we came out after the intermission," Mattera said. "Sometimes we get leads and give them up in the middle of a game. We really extended leads in

the third and fourth games. That was solid stuff against a good team."

Friesen and Workman got their team off to a good start in the opening set that saw the Bulldogs hit a sweltering .469. Friesen and Workman both went a perfect 5-for-5 on the attack as part of the onslaught. Workman ended up leading the team with 13 kills on 19 swings. Friesen had 12 on 17 attacks.

Friesen, who hails from Wichita, Kan., felt in such a groove that she got partway through the Macarena while entertaining the huddle between the first and second sets.

"I love it. These girls are the best," Friesen said. "I just get to be myself around them."

The Chargers provided resistance by hitting .458 during a second set in which six of their players had at least one kill. Concordia had difficulty all afternoon dealing with Breanna Nogelmeier, who had a match high 17 kills on 29 swings. She also posted four total blocks.

Just as they did a night earlier, the Bulldogs regrouped during the intermission. They held Briar Cliff to fewer kills (seven) than attack errors (eight) during the third set. Workman had another big performance, going 4-for-5 on the attack as Concordia took the third game, 25-19.

Defensively, sophomore Jocelyn Garcia led the Bulldogs with 16 digs. Claire White notched 12 kills and 14 digs. Junior Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 44 assists. Eight different Bulldogs had at least one kill and nine had at least one dig.

Concordia has now won six of its first seven GPAC matches for the first time since the 2000 GPAC championship team accomplished the feat. The 2000 Bulldogs went 9-1 in conference play and tied for the regular-season title.

The Bulldogs will try to hunt down their fifth win this season over a ranked opponent when they travel to play No. 22 Hastings (15-6, 6-2 GPAC) on Wednesday. First serve is set for 7:30 p.m. Concordia has won three of the last four meetings with the Broncos. This season's first matchup between the two sides ended in straight sets in the Bulldogs' favor.



BULLDOGS DEFEATED IN GPAC REMATCH

Oct. 7, 2015

FINAL: Hastings 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (10)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (12)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (29)

HASTINGS, Neb. – The No. 17 Concordia volleyball team was edge by No. 21 Hastings College Wednesday, Oct. 7 in straight sets, 25-20, 28-26, and 25-18. Six different Bulldogs recorded at least three kills in the rematch from earlier this season.

Said head coach Scott Mattera, “Well you had two teams in the top 10% of all teams in the country. They had a really on night and we were streaky. We’re still got some growing to do in terms of expecting everyone’s best match and then embracing the challenge when it happens.”

Senior Claire White led the way with 10 kills, bringing her career total to 921. Paige Getz also contributed seven kills to the Bulldogs’ 35 kill total. GPAC Setter of the Week Alayna Kavanaugh marked up 29 assists and tallied three kills.

As a team, CUNE recorded a .080 hitting percentage compared to Hastings’ .187. The Bulldogs led in the service aces column 4-3. The Broncos held the advantage in kills 37-35.

In the first set, the Bulldogs tied the game twice and came within two several times, but were not able to overcome the Hastings strong attack, hitting .259 in the set.

The second set saw a back and forth style of play with

a plus-25 point set. The Bulldogs took the lead off a kill from White and led by two twice more throughout the set. The lead changed two times in those 18 volleys with the Broncos prevailing, 28-26.

The Bulldogs got off to an early lead in the last set, leading for all but one volley throughout their first eight points. Concordia tied the set up three times, but were not able to get ahead enough to take the match.

The No. 17 Bulldogs were served their second GPAC loss of the season, making them 6-2 in conference play and 18-5 overall. The No. 21 Broncos improved to 16-6 overall and 7-2 in the GPAC.

“We’ll learn from this and get better,” Mattera noted on upcoming contests. “There is a lot of season left.”



Concordia will host Nebraska Wesleyan on Saturday, Oct. 10 for its homecoming match in Walz Arena. First serve is set for 6 p.m.



NO. 17 BULLDOGS GAIN A VICTORY OVER THE PRAIRIE WOLVES

Oct. 10, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Nebraska Wesleyan 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (9)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia and Claire White (11)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (31)

SEWARD, Neb. – The No. 17 Concordia volleyball team came out victorious over Nebraska Wesleyan University in the homecoming match on Saturday, Oct. 10. The Bulldogs took three straight, 25-21, 25-17 and 25-22. Six different Bulldogs notched at least six kills in the GPAC contest.

Head coach Scott Mattera said, “We prepared really well, the girls had a really good mind set. We had a couple of great practices Thursday and Friday and we talked about what consistency looks like and overall, we played pretty consistent. There were some ups and downs but it wasn’t the wild swings of momentum...we played a pretty smart match overall.”



Overall, the Bulldogs hit .255 as a team, recording 44 total kills. Claire White led the way with nine kills and also had 11 digs. Annie Friesen tallied eight kills and hit .389 on the match. Taylor Workman and Tiegen Skains each amassed seven kills. Setter Alayna Kavanaugh and Paige Getz each had six kills. Kavanaugh also dished out 31 assists. Libby Zagel owned four service aces.

“Paige made great decisions on the outside today, we saw more diverse shots out of her today,” Mattera noted. “Claire has every shot in the book and used every shot in the book. Tiegen wasn’t getting it done on the right so we changed her and started bringing her up the middle and she did great with it.”

The balanced attack started in the first set when seven Bulldogs claimed at least one kill. The team hit a solid .257 and recorded just four errors.

In the second set, CUNE stayed consistent with a balanced attack and hitting percentage. The Lady ‘Dogs hit .219 while holding the Prairie Wolves to -.032 in the second set and a two set combined percentage of .123.

Concordia ended the match with a hitting percentage of .282 in the third and left NWU with a three set mark of .162. The Bulldogs played a strong serving game with six aces and a .851 serving percentage for the match.

“We played well tonight,” White commented on the win. “We were really focused on our consistency and keeping a high level game the whole time and I think we did that well tonight. We really try to mix it up and make sure all our hitters are getting equal if not close to the same amount of balls. Alayna really focuses on that and does a really good job with that.”

The No. 17 Concordia Bulldogs improve to 19-5 overall and 7-2 in GPAC play. The loss dropped Nebraska Wesleyan to 6-14, 0-8 in GPAC.

The Bulldogs will be back on the court next Wednesday as they travel to Fremont, Neb. to take on No. 4 Midland who is still undefeated this season.



BULLDOGS SHOCK NO. 2 MIDLAND IN ROAD PULSE POUNDER

Oct. 14, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Midland 2

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Taylor Workman (12)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (23)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (43)

FREMONT, Neb. – Second-ranked Midland entered Wednesday night's battle undefeated and just one victory away from a program record winning streak. But the 17th-ranked Bulldogs were nails on the road, rallying back from a 2-1 deficit to snatch one of the more meaningful victories in the history of the Concordia University volleyball program. The Bulldogs won it in five, 25-23, 19-25, 14-25, 25-23, 15-11, inside the jam-packed Event Center in Fremont, Neb.

The win moved Concordia to 5-2 this season against ranked opponents. The Bulldogs, who had not defeated a top 10 opponent since a four-set victory over No. 9 Hastings on Aug. 29, 2007, are now 20-5 overall and 8-2 in conference play.

"I have nothing intelligent to say right now other than, wow," said fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera. "I'm so proud of these girls. For us to beat the No. 2 team in the country by out-blocking them and defending like crazy is simply amazing."

Wednesday's exhilarating victory came 18 days after Concordia knocked off No. 11 Northwestern on the road in similar fashion. In a déjà vu moment, junior Tiegen Skains completed the upset at Midland (22-1, 9-1 GPAC) with a game-winning kill from the right side just as she did in Orange City. In near disbelief, senior Claire White crumpled to the floor, then quickly rose up to join her bear-hugging Bulldog teammates at center court.

Or maybe White fell to the floor simply because she'd given all she could. Said Mattera, "We knew it was going to be an all-out battle and we are exhausted because we left it all out there."

Fittingly, Concordia's defensive effort led the charge in the fifth set. The Bulldogs finished with a season best 23 blocks behind stout middles Annie Friesen (three block solos, nine assists) and Taylor Workman (one block solo, nine assists). Concordia denied four Warrior attacks in the fifth set and held them to a negative hitting percentage (.105 overall on the night).

After trailing 6-4 in the fifth, the Bulldogs went on a 4-0 run initiated by a Skains kill and a combined block by Skains and Friesen. Concordia never surrendered the lead the rest of the way en route to ending Midland's home winning streak of eight and overall win streak of 22.

A Bulldog victory seemed especially improbable after head

coach Paul Giesseman's squad gained a 2-1 set advantage following a dominant third game for the Warriors that saw them outhit Concordia, .268 to .024. During that stretch, Midland appeared in total control as KC Heimann bombed six of her match high 21 kills.

Mattera's squad faced more adversity in the fourth set after it squandered a 14-7 lead. Midland came all the way back to earn an 18-16 advantage while following the lead of Heimann and middle Priscilla O'Dowd. The crowd roared as Concordia called timeout. The Bulldogs regrouped, then went up 21-18 only to see the lead melt away again. In response, Friesen pounded a kill and Midland committed an attack error to force the pulse-pounding fifth set.

In an evenly contested match, Concordia only slightly outhit the Warriors, .110 to .105. Workman topped the Bulldogs with 12 kills to go along with her 10 blocks. Friesen notched 11 kills and Paige Getz added 10. Junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 43 assists. Jocelyn Garcia had 23 digs and White 21. There were only five combined service aces in a well-played defensive white-knuckler.

The Warriors had not lost a match since a four-set defeat to Concordia University-Irvine at last year's NAIA national tournament. Concordia has pulled within one game of both Midland and No. 13 Dordt atop the GPAC standings.

The Bulldogs now have a week off from competition before returning to action next Wednesday (Oct. 21) when they host College of Saint Mary (junior varsity at 6 p.m.; varsity at 7:30 p.m.). The match will feature a pink out in conjunction with breast cancer awareness month. Fans can support the cause by purchasing this year's pink "block out breast cancer" T-shirt for \$10. Shirts can be picked up in the student life office or the student success center, both located in the Janzow Campus Center.





VOLLEYBALL MOVES INTO NATIONAL TOP 15 FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2000



SEWARD, Neb. – A fifth-straight appearance in the Tachikara - NAIA Volleyball Coaches' Top 25 Poll yielded the first top-15 ranking for the Concordia University volleyball program since October of 2000. On Tuesday the Bulldogs checked in at No. 15 in the latest edition of the rankings released by the NAIA.

Since making its first 2015 appearance in the poll on Sept. 22, head coach Scott Mattera's squad has made a slow ascent up to its current slotting. Concordia has been ranked 18th twice, 17th twice and now 15th. In the GPAC era (2000-present), the program's highest poll position was 12th during the conference title-winning season of 2000. That was also the most recent season in which the Bulldogs garnered multiple top 25 appearances.

Concordia has earned its lofty rating by going 5-2 against other top 25 foes. It possesses wins over No. 2 Midland, No. 11 Northwestern, No. 19 Hastings, No. 20 Montana Tech and No. 24 Doane.

The Bulldogs (20-5, 8-2 GPAC) host College of Saint Mary (10-13, 1-10 GPAC) at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Concordia has deemed the match a "pink out" in support of breast cancer awareness.

NAIA Volleyball Top-25 Poll

1	Biola (Calif.) (12)	19-2
2	Missouri Baptist (8)	25-3
3	Lindsey Wilson (Ky.)	23-3
4	Rocky Mountain (Mont.)	21-4
5	Columbia (Mo.)	18-5
6	Dordt (Iowa)	19-3
7	Viterbo (Wis.) (1)	28-3
8	Vanguard (Calif.)	17-4
9	Park (Mo.)	19-5
10	Midland (Neb.)	22-2
11	Eastern Oregon	19-2
12	Northwestern (Iowa)	21-5
13	Evangel (Mo.)	30-3
14	Southern Oregon	19-2
15	Concordia (Neb.)	20-5
16	Westmont (Calif.)	15-5
17	Lourdes (Ohio)	20-0
18	Georgetown (Ky.)	18-3
19	MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)	17-8
20	Coastal Georgia	20-3
21	Hastings (Neb.)	18-6
22	Madonna (Mich.)	22-5
23	Indiana Wesleyan	21-5
24	Oklahoma City	15-5
25	Grand View (Iowa)	17-11



WHITE-HOT BULLDOGS SMOTHER FLAMES

Oct. 21, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, College of Saint Mary 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (16)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (21)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (44)

SEWARD, Neb. – There were no signs of a hangover after last week's victory over previously unbeaten Midland. On Wednesday the 15th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team smoldered in the opening set, hitting .441 on the way to trouncing visiting College of Saint Mary, 25-11, 25-20, 25-15, inside Walz Arena.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad took care of business for the 25th time in its last 29 home matches. The Bulldogs improved to 21-5 overall, marking a new high-water mark for wins in a season during Mattera's tenure. Concordia is now 9-2 in conference play.

"I'm really, really happy with that effort," Mattera said. "That's a team that has given us fits so many times. They're scrappy. They make plays and they get stuff up that most teams don't get up



against us.

"First and third (sets) I'm very happy with."

Now in seventh place on the program's all-time kills list, senior Claire White burned College of Saint Mary (10-14, 1-11 GPAC) with a match high 16 kills on 32 attacks. She pasted five first-set kills and then came through with a booming strike when the Flames threatened to eat away at Concordia's control of the match in the second game. White crushed the CSM upset hopes with another powerful swing for set point in the second.

Fittingly, White also hammered down match point to complete 11th straight-sets victory of the year. With the Flames focused on stopping the Bulldog duo of Annie Friesen and Taylor Workman in the middle, White had a field day.

"We talked about the middles holding the block and that really helped open up the outside for me," White said.

Concordia put the contest away with a 10-2 splurge in the third set, breaking what had been a 9-9 tie. A Katie Peterson ace during the run forced a Flames timeout, but the visitors failed to make a serious threat. During the fifth set, White put down four more kills and Workman and Paige Getz added three apiece.

For the evening, Concordia outthit College of Saint Mary, .320 to .122. Sophomore Jocelyn Garcia came up with a match high 21 digs in the back row to key the defensive effort for the Bulldogs, who limited College of Saint Mary to only 27 kills. On the other hand, Concordia put away 48 points via kill – one third of that total came from White alone.

"You saw it open up and look what Claire did," Mattera said. "She was hitting on an open net half the night. She was strong. She hit good shots and also brought the heat when it was time to bring the heat."

Coming off a special performance in the win at Midland, Workman added nine kills on 16 attempts. Getz and Tiegen Skains chipped in eight kills apiece and Annie Friesen had six. Junior Alayna Kavanaugh set up all but four of the team's 48 kills. In addition, five different Bulldogs combined for eight aces, including two each for Kendra Dinkel, Kavanaugh and Libby Zigel.

College of Saint Mary, led by 15 kills from Mallory Babic, provided the most resistance in the second set when it fought back from a seven-point deficit and led 17-15. But White and the Bulldogs went on a 10-3 spurt to take a 2-0 lead in the match.

The Bulldogs continue a busy four-day stretch with a trip to South Dakota for a match apiece on Friday and Saturday. Up next is Friday's 7:30 p.m. contest at Dakota Wesleyan (11-14, 2-9 GPAC). The Bulldogs will then play Mount Marty (7-16, 2-10 GPAC) at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday.



GARCIA KEYS DEFENSIVE SNUFFING OF DWU

Oct. 23, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Dakota Wesleyan 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (10)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (21)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (33)

MITCHELL, S.D. – Sophomore defensive specialist Jocelyn Garcia frustrated the Dakota Wesleyan attack all night and the 15th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team dispatched of the host Tigers, 25-14, 25-22, 25-17, on Friday night. The Bulldogs outhit Dakota Wesleyan handily, .202 to .038.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad has now won eight of its last night matches, including four in a row. The Bulldogs are now 22-5 overall and 10-2 in conference action. The 22 victories are the most for the program since the 2005 squad went 24-11.

"We watched a lot of video on them and they're a much improved team," Mattera said in a postgame interview with Max Country radio. "You come up to their place on a Friday night – senior night – and their digging balls and flying around the court. We knew this was going to be a tough match. We're really happy with what we did tonight."

Dakota Wesleyan (11-15, 2-10 GPAC) played competitively in the second set and held a 12-9 advantage in the third set before Concordia went on a 13-4 run to take control and squelch any designs on an upset. With Garcia running around in the back row (match high 21 digs), the Bulldogs shut down the Tiger attack. Dakota Wesleyan posted negative hitting percentages in both the first and third sets.

On the other side of the net, senior Claire White continued a big week for the Bulldogs. Fresh off a 16-kill performance in Wednesday's win over College of Saint Mary, the native of Exeter, Neb., put down a match best 10 kills. She got the Bulldogs humming out of the gates with five kills during a dominant opening set.

The Tigers also struggled to contain Concordia's potent combination in the middle. Sophomore Annie Freisen (nine kills, four blocks) and Taylor Workman (seven kills, two blocks) combined for 16 kills on only 27 swings. Once

again, setter Alayna Kavanaugh made solid reads in dishing out 33 assists.

"Claire really came through with some shots and swings at big times and Jocelyn read really well defensively," Mattera said. "Seven digs per game is a huge number. She really mixed disciplined system ball with freedom to read really well. Our middles were great again in system with both hitting for a great percentage."



Concordia finished with advantages of 39-23 in kills, 58-50 in digs and 5-2 in aces. The Tigers, now 7-6 at home, were led by eight kills from Lauren Tadlock.

White, who has played in 317 sets over three seasons as a Bulldog, has 976 total kills in her collegiate career. She is closing in on becoming the seventh player in program history to reach the 1,000-kill mark.

The Bulldogs remain in South Dakota on Saturday to take on Mount Marty (7-17, 2-10 GPAC). First serve from Yankton, S.D., is set for 1:30 p.m. Concordia has won each of the last eight meetings with the Lancers.



NO. 15 BULLDOGS CONTINUE TO ROLL THROUGH GPAC OPPONENTS

Oct. 24, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Mount Marty 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (12)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (23)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (39)

YANKTON, S.D. – The No. 15 Concordia volleyball team defeated its fifth straight opponent on Saturday, Oct. 24. The Bulldogs made the Lancers their most recent victim, topping them 3-1 (25-21, 20-25, 25-17 and 25-20). The team hit .238 through four sets.

The win improves the Bulldogs to 23-5 (11-2 GPAC) while the Lancers drop to 7-20 (2-11 GPAC).

Head coach Scott Mattera said, “It certainly wasn’t our prettiest match but Mount Marty really played well and gave us some looks we were used to. We recovered in time to win and Annie

and Taylor really got going again. Jocelyn was really solid again defensively, she’s had a big week.”

Leading the Bulldog squad in kills was sophomore Annie Friesen who notched up 12 kills with just one error and hit .478 on the day. Claire White had 11 kills, marking her third match in a row with double-digit kills. Taylor workman assisted a team high five blocks and tallied seven kills.

Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 39 assists and recorded five kills. Defensively, Jocelyn Garcia had 23 digs while Kendra Dinkel had 15. White and Libby Zigel each owned two service aces.

“We’ve been really good at adjusting and reading what teams are doing but we kind of struggled with that today, coaching staff included,” Mattera noted. “Credit to Mount Marty for passing well and staying in system and running some good and subtle stuff to throw us off. Overall, we’re happy with a GPAC road win against another team who really brought their “A” game against us.”

In the first set, Concordia went on an 8-1 run to come back from a 17-20 deficit and win the set, 25-21. The team hit .147 in the frame and held the Lancers to a .111 percentage.

The second set went to the Lancers on a 25-20 decision. Concordia hit .233 in the set and marked up 14 kills. The score was tied at 12 before Mount Marty went on a 3-0 run and the Bulldogs were not able to close the gap.

The third and fourth sets belongs to the Bulldogs who out hit the Lancers .290 and .286 to .135 and .175, respectively. CUNE hit a match high 15 kills in the final set. The ‘Dogs took the third set, 25-17 and the fourth, 25-20.

The Bulldogs will be back on the court on Wednesday, Oct. 28 as they welcome (RV) Doane College (18-10, 8-5 GPAC) to Walz Arena.





ERRORS PLAGUE NO. 16 IN UPSET LOSS

Oct. 28, 2015

FINAL: Doane 3, Concordia

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (14)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (20)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (43)

SEWARD, Neb. – The Bulldogs' quest for their first GPAC title since 2000 took a blow on Wednesday night. Visiting Doane ensured its second meeting with the 16th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team would be different. The Tigers sizzled in the opening set and played a significantly cleaner match than its opposition on the way to a 25-19, 25-22, 18-25, 25-14, win inside Walz Arena.

In the process, Doane (19-10, 9-5 GPAC) snapped the five-match win streak of fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad, which had entered the night red hot. The Bulldogs (23-6, 11-3 GPAC) fell for just the fifth time over their past 30 home matches.

"We've got to be tougher. That's all there is to it," Mattera said. "We've got to be mentally tougher. We did not respond to our mistakes well. We compounded things."

On this night, Concordia simply could not get out of its own way. At one point in the second set, the Bulldogs had committed 13 attack errors to only one by the Tigers. Just when it looked like Concordia may mount a rally, it followed a successful third set with 14 total errors in the fourth and final set. Doane's Megan Fletcher ultimately completed the upset by burying a kill for match point.

The Tigers set an ominous tone for the night when they went on a 5-0 first-set run and led 19-13. Led by four kills each from Fletcher and Kaitlin Bradley, Doane hit a blistering .462 in the opening set that saw it post just a single attack error. The Tigers also proved better at the net, recording a 12-3 advantage in team blocks. Fittingly, the opening set ended with a Jessy Hunt block.

Paige Getz (match high 14 kills) and the Bulldogs had by far their best performance on the attack in set No. 3 when they hit .243 and floored 16 kills. Tiegen Skains and Taylor Workman combined for six kills on 11 swings in the third to give Concordia's comeback hopes life. Jocelyn Garcia cleaned up seven of her match high 20 digs during the third set as The Tigers hit .036.

But fortunes reversed back in Doane's favor in the fourth. Nothing much went right following an Annie Friesen kill that tied it, 6-6. The Tigers then went on a 14-4 splurge with half of those

points courtesy of Bulldog attack errors. At that point Concordia had dug a hole too deep.

Workman (11 kills) joined Getz with double figure kills. Meanwhile, Claire White notched nine kills to run her career total to 996. As a team, the Bulldogs actually outnumbered Doane in kills, 50-42.

At night's end, Concordia sits in a three-way tie for second place behind No. 8 Dordt (12-2) and No. 12 Northwestern (12-2) atop the GPAC standings. Each of the top-five teams has two regular-season matches remaining.

The Bulldogs will host their home regular-season finale on Saturday when Dordt (21-4 overall) pays a visit to Walz Arena. Concordia will honor a group of seven seniors in a pregame ceremony. In the most recent meeting, Skains pounded 20 kills and the Bulldogs knocked off the then 21st-ranked Defenders in five sets in Seward on Oct. 25, 2014.





WHITE REACHES 1,000 CAREER KILLS IN LOSS AGAINST NO. 8 DORDT

Oct. 31, 2015

FINAL: Dordt 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Tiegen Skains (12)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (13)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (33)

As a team, the Bulldogs recorded seven blocks to the Defenders' six and also served up more aces than Dordt (5-3). Concordia hit .147 on the match and posted up 36 total kills.

The first and third sets were back and forth battles with several long rallies. CUNE outhit Dordt .156 to .139 in the first set but was ultimately defeated by two. The third set saw Concordia's best hitting average of .256 when White notched kill number 1,000.

The second set was a different story as the Bulldogs were defeated by a bigger margin than two points, 17-25. The middle set was plagued with attack errors for Concordia.

"We'll see about seeding and whatnot when we get to that, but honestly we're just worried about getting better," Mattera noted. "We've got a lot left to go. We have a good match on Wednesday and then we have to take it strong into the GPAC Tournament."

Next up for the No. 16 Concordia volleyball team is a road trip to Nebraska Wesleyan University. The Bulldogs' last regular season game will start at 7:30 p.m.



SEWARD, Neb. – Senior Claire White grabbed her 1,000th career kill in a gritted out battle with Dordt College Saturday, Oct. 31. The No. 8 Defenders edged the No. 16 Bulldogs, 3-0 (25-23, 25-17, 25-23) on Senior Night inside Walz Arena.

The Bulldogs drop to 23-7 (11-4 GPAC) while the Defenders

improve to 22-4 (13-2 GPAC).

Said head coach Scott Mattera, "That's really good volleyball, if anyone wants to see what NAIA volleyball is all about at the top level, that's all that was. Great job by them, great job by us, they came out on top."

White recorded four kills in her milestone night and one service ace. Leading the Bulldogs in kills was Tiegen Skains who posted 12 kills and hit .292 on the match. Annie Friesen hit a team high .333 and owned eight kills while Paige Getz killed the ball seven times.

Alayna Kavanaugh dished out 33 assists. Seniors Kendra Dinkel and Libby Zagel eached notched up three service aces. Defensively, libero Jocelyn Garcia recorded a game-high 13 digs.



KAVANAUGH DIRECTS WIN AT WESLEYAN IN REGULAR-SEASON FINALE

Nov. 4, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Nebraska Wesleyan 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (15)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (19)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (49)

LINCOLN, Neb. – In a match crucial to its GPAC tournament seeding, the 20th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team unloaded an artillery set loose by junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh. Her perfectly-executed passes sparked the Bulldogs to a 25-13, 25-19, 25-20, win over Nebraska Wesleyan inside Snyder Arena in Lincoln on Wednesday. In the process, Kavanaugh and company completed the program's first season sweep of the Prairie Wolves since 2006.

Thanks to the victory and Northwestern's loss at Dordt, Concordia has sewed up the right to host a GPAC quarterfinal match for the second-straight season. The 17th-ranked Red Raiders will visit Seward on Saturday for a 7:30 p.m. first serve in a battle of the league's Nos. 4 and 5 seeds. The Bulldogs will enter the postseason at 24-7 overall, including a final GPAC mark of 12-4.

"We looked like a pretty good volleyball team tonight," said fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera. "They really followed the plan tonight. You saw some of the smartest decision making both hitting-wise and read-wise in the back row.

"Overall I'm thrilled with how we played."

Concordia looked the part of the heavy favorite on Wednesday night, rolling in a decisive first set. Senior outside Claire White got her team off and running with four kills in the opening set before passing the torch to sophomore Annie Friesen in the middle. The Prairie Wolves (9-19, 3-13 GPAC) had no answer for the Wichita, Kan., native, who tore the opposition apart with seven of her 15 kills in the second set.

Friesen helped Concordia dig out from beneath a slight hole in the second game. With setter Alayna Kavanaugh spraying the ball around to find the hot hand, the Bulldogs easily outthit the host Prairie Wolves, .368 to .132. Kavanaugh's 49 assists were a career best for a straight-sets contest.

"I tried to mix the ball around as much as possible and get everyone going," Kavanaugh said. "It was a good night for that." Not only did Friesen and White combine for 28 kills, outside hitter Paige Getz added nine and right side Tiegen Skains hammered another nine. White's monster night included 15 digs and a .423 hitting percentage. Friesen needed just 25 attempts to rack up her 15 kills.



On the other side of the net, Nebraska Wesleyan failed to establish much rhythm. Concordia defensive specialist Jocelyn Garcia dug up a match high 19 attacks and Kendra Dinkel pitched in 12 digs. Their work helped limit Nebraska Wesleyan to only six kills in set No. 1 and 27 for the entire match. Conversely, Concordia floored 54 kills, including 22 in a third set power display.

"Alayna is distributing like crazy. She really made great decisions," Mattera said. "And I have to give a shout out to Paige. She's not feeling well at all and you wouldn't have known it at all."

By notching its 24th win of the season on Wednesday, Concordia has its highest win total since 2005 and has tied for the sixth most wins in a single season in program history.

Nebraska Wesleyan, which is in its final season as a member of the GPAC, got a team high six kills from Malory Dahl and Kierra Harder. The Prairie Wolves' 2015 campaign came to an end on Wednesday.

In one of Saturday's GPAC quarterfinal tilts, Concordia will welcome No. 17 Northwestern (24-7, 12-4 GPAC) in a match scheduled to get underway at 7:30 p.m. inside Walz Arena. In this season's first meeting, the then 18th-ranked Bulldogs upset the 11th-ranked Red Raiders in five sets in Orange City, Iowa, on Sept. 26. Saturday's winner will advance to the semifinals to play either top-seeded Dordt or eighth-seeded College of Saint Mary on Wednesday, Nov. 11.



NO. 20 CONCORDIA ADVANCES TO GPAC SEMIFINALS FOR SECOND-STRAIGHT YEAR

Nov. 7, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, Northwestern 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Claire White (14)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (21)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (39)

SEWARD, Neb. – A different Bulldog squad emerged from the huddle following a rough first set. In a complete reversal of fortunes, the 20th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team jumped out to a 10-1 advantage in the second set and rode that wave of momentum to a 13-25, 25-21, 25-22, 25-21 win over No. 17 Northwestern in Saturday night's GPAC quarterfinal match inside Walz Arena.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad earned a season sweep of the Red Raiders (24-8) while moseying on to the GPAC semifinals for the second-consecutive season. Concordia is now 25-7 overall and 6-3 versus ranked opponents in 2015.

"What a match," Mattera said. "We came out really sluggish and Northwestern played fantastic in that first game. I'm so proud

of the way that girls responded and for staying even in games two, three and four. It would have been really easy to duck our heads after the whooping we took in game one. They stayed in it and stayed together."

Outside hitter



Claire White showed senior leadership by brushing off a dominant opening set for the Red Raiders. White put away points two, three, four, six and eight as Concordia got the crowd back into it in the second set. White finished with a team high 14 kills while also adding 13 digs.

Most impressively, the Bulldogs got it done defensively against a squad that entered the night ranked No. 1 in the GPAC in hitting percentage and kills per set. Concordia held down star Karlie Schut, who finished with nine kills and a .097 attack percentage. As a team, the Red Raiders hit .169 overall after attacking at a .265 clip in the big opening set.

Fittingly, the match ended when Tiegen Skains and Taylor Workman combined on a block of Jessica Van Beek for the clinching point. For the second year in a row, the Bulldogs had the opportunity to celebrate a home GPAC tournament victory.

"Coach talked to us all night about blocking well. That's something we kind of focused on," Skains said. "It's easy to play when you're not thinking. In the first game we thought a lot and were worrying too much about system stuff. We just went out and played well and played hard."

No one player put up eye-popping statistics on Saturday, but collectively Concordia played exceptional defense. It posted 12 blocks and dug up 65 of Northwestern's total 142 attacks. Sophomore Jocelyn Garcia came up with 21 digs and Kendra Dinkel added 14. While middle Annie Friesen was contained on the attack, she went for seven total blocks.

A battle-tested and experienced bunch, the Bulldogs proved that very little will phase them. Concordia looked the part of a team with national tournament aspirations.

"One thing that we focused on was playing for each other and not worrying about the team on the other side of the **court**," Skains said. "Sometimes I think we get obsessed with that stuff. It was about playing and not thinking."

Skains finished with 11 kills. Junior Paige Getz chipped in 11. The Bulldogs hit .126 as a team, but saved their best offensive work for the fifth game when they posted a .265 attack percentage. Setter Alayna Kavanaugh had 39 assists.

Cheers rang out from several Bulldog volleyball players while Mattera chatted during his postgame interview. News of eighth-seeded College of Saint Mary's upset over top-seeded Dordt began to spread. That result means Concordia will be back at home for the GPAC semifinals. The Flames (13-16) will travel to Walz Arena for a 7:30 p.m. first serve on Wednesday.

The winner will be on the road for the GPAC championship against either second-seeded Midland or third-seeded Hastings. The title game is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 14.



NO. 17 CONCORDIA ADVANCES TO GPAC CHAMPIONSHIP FOR FIRST TIME

Nov. 11, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 3, College of Saint Mary 1

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (16)

Digs - Claire White (23)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (46)



SEWARD, Neb. – The No. 17 Concordia women's volleyball team is heading to the GPAC Championship match after defeating College of Saint Mary Wednesday night, 3-1 (21-25, 25-16, 25-16, 28-26). The conference final will take place at No. 8 Midland on Saturday, Nov. 14 with first serve set for 3 p.m. This will be the first time that the Bulldogs will appear in the GPAC Championship round.

The Bulldogs improve to 26-7 on the season and need one more win to tie

for the fifth most wins in program history. The College of Saint Mary Flames fall to 13-17 on their first year in the GPAC.

Head coach Scott Mattera said, "That wasn't pretty, again we just came out tight. We talked about it and we identified it but it was still just tight. We knew Saint Mary was going to do that, that's how they beat Dordt. Their coach is doing an incredible job and those girls played their hearts out."

In the first set, the Bulldogs committed just under half of their total attacking errors and hit just .093 in the frame. The set was tied eight different times but saw multiple runs by the Flames. CSM went on an 8-3 run to take a 19-14 lead. The Bulldogs came back to score three in a row later in the set to give the Flames' three chances to take the set. The Flames killed it to end the first set, 25-21.

Said senior Claire White, "A lot of times we come out tight. I don't know if it's mentally preparing for the first set is kind of hard, you don't know what your body is going to do or what they're going to do that night. After the first set you kind of get a better feel and realize you have to win three sets to win the whole thing."

The second frame saw a big defensive effort from the Bulldogs, holding the Flames to a .103 hitting percentage. Concordia hit just under three times better in the second set with a percentage of .276. Mattera's squad hit just three attack errors in 31 attempts in the second set to give them a 25-16 win.

The Bulldogs improved their hitting percentage again in the third set to .279 with four errors in 43 attempts. Concordia never trailed in the frame, leading by as much as nine. Three out of the final four points in the set were kills from three different Bulldogs. CUNE took the third set again, 25-16.

The fourth and longest set was in the Bulldogs favor, 28-26. There were 16 ties throughout the set with the largest Concordia lead at four. CUNE had five chances to take the set, but the Flames battled back from a 21-24 deficit to make the Bulldogs fight for it. The 'Dogs hit a match high .313 in the final frame with 20 kills. A kill from Tiegen Skains and an attack error from the Flames sealed the victory for the Bulldogs.

"How great were we in those points?" Mattera noted on the last set. "Yeah, we could kick ourselves for letting them get back in there when we had a couple of match points. If you look at every point that we scored after it was even, those were all big kills. I can't say enough about the way we competed down the stretch."

Concordia's defensive game showed up big, putting up six blocks and 82 digs, holding the Flames to a .075 hitting percentage. The Bulldogs hit .230 over the four sets and recorded 60 kills. Each team registered five service aces while.

White tallied 15 kills and 23 digs. The senior hit .235 on the night and dished out one assist.

"I'm just playing hard," White said. "It's post season, if you lose you're done. I'm a senior and I definitely want to go out with no regrets. I've been playing every game like it's my last and I want to keep doing that consistently."

Paige Getz led the Bulldogs with 16 kills and just four errors in 50 attempts. She hit .240 in the semifinal match. Alayna Kavanaugh set up 46 kills and recorded four kills herself. The junior also recorded one service ace. Libero Jocelyn Garcia dug up 22 Flames' attacks and served up two aces. Annie Friesen added nine kills and three blocks to her line while Taylor Workman put up seven kills.

"It was a good game, we played hard," White added. "College of Saint Mary always plays good defense...we knew it was going to be a battle and that we would have to push through those long points, but a lot of those fell in our favor and it really helped us."

The No. 17 Bulldogs will travel to No. 8 Midland University for the GPAC Championship match on Saturday, Nov. 14. The tilt is slated for 3 p.m. from Fremont, Neb.



BULLDOGS FALL TO WARRIORS IN FIRST GPAC CHAMPIONSHIP APPEARANCE

Nov. 14, 2015

FINAL: Midland 3, Concordia 0

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Annie Friesen (9)

Digs - Kendra Dinkel (10)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (26)

FREMONT, Neb. – The No. 17 Concordia volleyball team made its first GPAC Championship appearance on Saturday, Nov. 14. The Bulldogs faced the No. 8 Midland University Warriors in Fremont and were defeated in straight sets (25-20, 25-17, 25-16). Sophomore Annie Friesen had nine kills in 11 attempts to lead Concordia.

Said head coach Scott Mattera, “We struggled in the serve and pass game and you can’t do that verse a team like that. Our fingers are crossed for nationals and we’re going to move forward and learn from it. We have to be mentally tougher and stay together and play the next point.”

The Concordia Bulldogs are now 26-8 on the season while the Midland Warriors improve to 29-3.

In the first frame, the Bulldogs hit .179 and put up a team high 13 kills. Concordia went on a four point run to take a 14-12 lead featuring a kill each by Paige Getz and Taylor Workman. The Warriors took the lead back on a Bulldog attacking error and led the rest of the way.

The Warriors jumped to a 9-4 lead in the second set. CUNE trailed for the entire set with the exception of a 15-15 tie. The Bulldogs went on a 6-2 run to knot up the game. The ‘Dogs registered nine kills in the set.

Midland shut down Concordia in the third set, forcing six attack errors. CUNE was able to put a three point run early in the frame to come within two but struggled to hang on. The Warriors took charge of the set, recording a match high 15 kills in the frame.

Friesen led the Bulldogs with a .818 hitting percentage, recording nine kills and no errors in 11 attempts. Getz and Workman added six and five kills, respectively. Kavanaugh dished out 26 assists in the match. Claire White, Kendra Dinkel and Jocelyn Garcia each recorded a service ace.

“We don’t change who we are just because of a bad

hour and a half,” Mattera said. “Regardless of what happened

here today this is still one of the greatest seasons in the history of Concordia volleyball. They have brought a community together behind them – how

awesome was our crowd here at Midland today? It was so cool to see how many people care now and that’s a credit to our girls. Regardless of what happens whether we’re in or out, it’s been a heck of year and I wouldn’t trade this team for anyone.”

As a team, the Bulldogs hit .068 in the afternoon match. The team also put up five blocks, 28 kills and 41 digs.

Mattera said, “We’re right on the bubble, it depends if there are upsets in the other conferences that would knock at-large bids around. As of last week, we were kind of the last team in. We may move up in the rankings after making the finals in this unbelievable conference. That would be my hope.”

The No. 17 Concordia volleyball team will wait until Monday, Nov. 16 to see if there is a NAIA Tournament spot waiting for them.





VOLLEYBALL EARNS PROGRAM'S FIRST-EVER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT BID

SEWARD, Neb. – The Concordia University volleyball program's historic 2015 journey will continue into the opening round of the NAIA Volleyball National Championships. On Monday the NAIA announced the Bulldogs as one of eight at-large teams and one of 36 total qualifiers in the tournament field. Concordia will make its first-ever national tournament appearance on Saturday when it hosts Olivet Nazarene University (Ill.) at 1:30 p.m. CT.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad, ranked 16th in the latest national poll released on Monday, entered the day squarely on the bubble. Just after 10 a.m., players and staff members gathered in the Walz Conference Room and celebrated as Concordia appeared on the screen during the NAIA's selection show. The Bulldogs were slotted seventh among the eight at-large qualifiers.

Concordia's resume includes an overall record of 26-8, a mark of 6-4 versus ranked opponents and a GPAC tournament runner-up claim. The Bulldogs have earned top-25 ratings in nine-consecutive polls, rising as high as 15th.

Meanwhile, Olivet Nazarene punched its ticket to the national tournament by winning the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference regular-season championship. The Tigers own a record of 23-16 overall. Guided by 20th-year head coach Brenda Williams, Olivet Nazarene won 17 of its 19 conference matches. The Tigers did not receive votes this week in the national poll after falling to the University of Saint Francis in the semifinals of the CCAC tournament.

Concordia and Olivet Nazarene shared eight common opponents during the 2015 season. Against those foes, the Bulldogs went 7-4. The Tigers went 4-7 against those same opponents. Olivet Nazarene pushed Midland to five sets in a loss on Sept. 4. It also fell in four sets to Hastings that same day.

The 2015 Bulldogs have reached uncharted territory. Even the 1981 and 1995 Concordia Athletic Hall of Fame teams fell short of reaching the national tournament. The 1995 squad went 40-10 overall and came up one win shy at the regional

tournament in its bid to reach nationals.

The winner of Saturday's opening round match will advance to the final site - the Tyson Events Center in Sioux City, Iowa. Action from Sioux City will take place from Dec. 1-3.

With a national tournament berth still hanging in the balance, here's what five different Bulldogs had to say last week about the possibility of playing on the grand stage:

Junior Alayna Kavanaugh: "We all talk about it and want it to happen. We're planning on it happening. It would be a great experience in making history again."

Sophomore Annie Friesen: "That would be incredible. It would be a dream come true."

Senior Claire White: "There's no better time to do it. We're going to do it. Obviously this is my last chance. I think it's a great program in general with the girls we have. I think this would be the year definitely to do it."

Junior Paige Getz: "I try not to think about it yet. We're trying to get that GPAC win. I know it will be a crazy environment with lots of good teams out there. It will be fun."

Junior Tieggen Skains: "I think it would be awesome. Walz is a lot of fun, especially when we have a huge crowd and the band going. It's cool to have one of those things where it's never happened before and knowing you're part of that is awesome."





SEVEN BULLDOGS NAMED TO ALL-GPAC TEAMS, MATTERA NAMED TRI-COACH OF THE YEAR

SEWARD, Neb. – The Great Plains Athletic Conference announced the Hauff Mid-America Sports/GPAC All-Conference Teams Wednesday. Three members of the Concordia volleyball team have been named to the first team all-GPAC team while head coach Scott Mattera was named one of the tri-head coaches of the year. Four more student-athletes were selected to receive all-conference honors, two to the second team and two more on the honorable mention team.

Selected to the first team all-GPAC team were junior Alayna Kavanaugh, sophomore Jocelyn Garcia and sophomore Annie Friesen. Receiving second team accolades were senior Claire White and junior Paige Getz. On the honorable mention team were juniors Tiegen Skains and Taylor Workman.

Head coach Mattera was selected as one of the tri-head coaches of the year. In his fourth year as head coach, Mattera has put built a team that has made historic marks at Concordia. For the first time, the Concordia volleyball team is heading to the NAIA Tournament after being the runner-up in the GPAC Tournament. The squad has also put together a sixth-best winning season. The 26 wins this year have been the most since 1996 when the squad reached 28 victories.

Kavanaugh, a junior from Lincoln, Neb., has been selected to the all-conference first team for the second time in her career. The setter has dished out a total of 1,296 assists this year, which is the second-best in the GPAC, and averages 10.8 assists per set, also second in the GPAC. Kavanaugh has helped a Bulldog attacking crew that has put

together a season .227 hitting percentage. The junior also has a .228 hitting percentage, recording 111 kills. Kavanaugh has been named the GPAC Setter of the Week twice this season.

Garcia, a sophomore from Brighton, Colo., received her first all-conference selection this year. The libero for the Bulldogs averages 4.4 digs a set and has amassed 535 total digs. Garcia has also proven to be an important element in Concordia's serving game. The sophomore has recorded 69 service aces (second-most in GPAC and 29th in the country) and averages .45 aces per set (tied for second in GPAC). Garcia has been named the GPAC Defensive Player of the week twice this season.

Friesen, a sophomore from Wichita, Kan., has been received all-GPAC honors for the first time in her career. As one of Concordia's middles, Friesen has put together a team-best .382 hitting percentage which ranks third in the GPAC. Connecting with Kavanaugh on quick sets, the sophomore is one of the most difficult attackers in the GPAC to defend. Friesen also leads the Bulldogs in blocks, averaging .89 a set and registering 108 total this year.

White, a senior from Exeter, Neb., has been named to the all-GPAC second team. This is her third all-conference selection. White was previously named to the honorable mention team in 2013 and the first team in 2014. White has made her mark in Concordia

volleyball, recording her 1,000th kill this season. She has put up 317 kills so far this season and averages a team-best 2.78 a set. White also excels in the serving category. With the second-best team service ace numbers, the senior averages .34 a set and has





49 total.

Getz, a junior from Paola, Kan., has now been selected to an all-conference team for the second time. Getz received all-GPAC honorable mention honors last season and second-team honors this season. The junior has put 332 kills together this season, which leads the team. As an outside attacker, Getz has also recorded 46 total blocks, averaging .38 a set. She has also been a part of a Bulldog squad that has averages 14 kills a set. Against York College, Getz recorded a match-high 20 kills and committed just three errors.

Skains, a junior from Colorado Springs, Colo., has been named to the honorable mention team for the second straight season. The junior owns a .218 attack percentage and averages 2.3 kills a set. Skains also has blocked 50 opponent attacks. The right side hitter has had a match-high 14 kills twice this year, once at Northwestern and once against Morningside. In each of those contests, Skains hit at least .320 throughout the match.

Workman, a junior from Lincoln, Neb., has received her first all-GPAC honor this year on the honorable mention team. Workman has been a consistent attacker for the Bulldogs this season,

hitting .333 and averaging 1.9 kills a set. The junior hit a match-high 14 kills against Montana Tech and made just three errors in the match. In five different contests, Workman has committed no errors with at least eight attempts. She also averages .60 blocks a set, amassing 78 total blocks.

The No. 16 Concordia volleyball (26-8, 12-4 GPAC) team will compete in the opening round of the NAIA Tournament. The match will be held at home in Walz Arena against Olivet Nazarene with first serve slated for 1:30 p.m.





HISTORY MADE: DAWGS JOURNEY TO THE TOURNEY

By Jake Knabel, Director of Athletic Communications



The making of a national tournament volleyball team at Concordia did not happen overnight. The core of the first Bulldog squad ever to break through and reach the national tournament all arrived in the last two to four years, brought in by head coach Scott Mattera as part of a vision to bring the program back to glory.

The impressive collection of talent has helped Concordia leap from 11 wins in 2012 to 26 victories in 2015.

"It's been amazing," said junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh. "I've enjoyed seeing where we started and where we are now. It's taken a lot of hard work. Looking back for a second and seeing where we were freshman year, we've come a long ways."

With an entertaining and balanced approach, Kavanaugh and the Bulldogs advanced to the 2015 GPAC title match, marking another first in program history. Along the way they defeated six nationally-ranked teams behind their loaded arsenal that includes five players with more than 200 kills. One of the nation's most powerful and crowd-pleasing attacks has led Concordia to unprecedented success.

"This is an awesome accomplishment – first time in program history," Mattera said. "That history goes back 40 years so that's a really cool thing to be able to do. Just as big as making it (to nationals) is we get to host a first-round match. At this point,

this is gravy. We're going to work our tails off and see how good we can be. There's nothing to lose at this point."

Dreams of reaching the national stage became reality on the morning of Nov. 16. A large portion of the team gathered in the Walz athletic building to watch the NAIA national tournament selection show. Plenty of tension and nervousness clouded the room with Concordia sitting squarely on the bubble. Those emotions turned into jubilation as the Bulldog logo appeared on screen.

Seniors Kendra Dinkel and Libby Zagel hugged. Kavanaugh knocked over her water bottle. Graduate assistant coach Amanda Abbott pounded her hands on the table repeatedly. Jocelyn Garcia yelled, "We get to host?!"

Days earlier, sophomore Annie Friesen called a national tournament bid "a dream come true." Senior Claire White knew her team was capable, saying "There's no better time to do it. We're going to do it. Obviously this is my last chance."

The likes of Kavanaugh, Friesen, Garcia, Paige Getz, Tiegen Skains, White and Taylor Workman serve as the nucleus of a roster built upon players who had to believe in a vision and see past recent program struggles during their recruitment. Of course, the spirit of Concordia athletics is not simply about winning on the court.

Mattera and many players attribute the rise of the program to the atmosphere of positivity that has been fostered. Team chemistry has been built through an environment that encourages the Bulldogs to be loose and play for each other. The results are a product of the process.

That's not to say everything about this season has been perfect. A late regular-season home loss at the hands of Doane appeared to put the team's at-large national tournament hopes in jeopardy. But it would have been incredibly difficult not to smile two days later as Friesen mimicked the Napoleon Dynamite dance in front of her teammates. It was part of an on-campus costume-themed team get-together on the eve of Halloween.

"It's funny, I didn't talk to anyone like the first week here," Friesen said. "They found out I was weird and crazy and they were OK with it. So it's good."

It's this type of dynamic that lessened the worry of chemistry problems that could have resulted from the prevalence of big-time hitters. Mattera brought in players that were used to being go-to options for their high school and club teams. Now there are times when they must wait their turn for a quick-witted Kavanaugh set to come their way.

"It's different," Getz said. "It's been hard to adjust coming from high school and getting all the sets. I like it because I know that I have other hitters behind my back that can put the ball down



just as hard as I can.”

Added Kavanaugh, “It’s crazy because each one of our hitters I trust and know they can put the ball away. There’s no problem with setting it to them and not taking care of the ball. It’s awesome because a lot of teams just have one or two go-to hitters. All of ours are go-to hitters.”

Hard-hitting and fun-loving best describe this bunch of Bulldogs, who have appeared in the NAIA national rankings for a program GPAC-era record nine-straight polls.

This year’s journey to the tourney has taken Concordia from the Windy City to around the GPAC footprint and potentially to Sioux City, Iowa, where the final 24 national tournament teams left standing will converge. No matter where it ends, it’s an expedition that will be remembered by the program record books but, more importantly, by the people who experienced it.

From the Friesen in-game dances and rock-star salutes to the White fist pumps to the Diane Kavanaugh (mother of Alayna) celebrations alongside the student body to the momentous wins, it’s been an unforgettable ride.

“It’s been so fun,” Workman said. “These girls are just awesome. It’s so fun to share this experience with them and put in hard work with them and see the results. It’s awesome.”

On Saturday, the Concordia University volleyball program will play in its first-ever national tournament match while immersed in an expected wild Walz atmosphere. It could be the just the start of something even bigger.

Said Skains, “It’s really cool to know you’re part of something like that, that’s this big. I can’t wait to see where it goes.”





FIRST-EVER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT APPEARANCE ENDS IN OPENING ROUND

Nov. 21, 2015

FINAL: Concordia 0, Olivet Nazarene 3

GAME HIGHS

Kills - Paige Getz (14)

Digs - Jocelyn Garcia (24)

Assists - Alayna Kavanaugh (34)

SEWARD, Neb. – Making its first-ever NAIA Volleyball National Championship appearance, the 16th-ranked Concordia University volleyball team came up agonizingly short in each set on Saturday afternoon. Champions of the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference, visiting Olivet Nazarene University (Ill.) crashed the party with a 25-23, 27-25, 26-24 upset of the Bulldogs inside Walz Arena.

The Tigers, coached by Brenda Williams, were making their 11th all-time trip to the national tournament (second in a row). Olivet Nazarene (24-16) fought off Concordia set-point opportunities in the second and third games and then celebrated when Emma Ross' attack found the floor for match point.

Fourth-year head coach Scott Mattera's squad finished at 26-9 overall in a season that included a GPAC championship match appearance.

"That's what nationals volleyball looks like," Mattera said. "(Olivet Nazarene) is not going to give it to you. They're a solid team and they made very few mistakes. We got a little bit stagnant offensively here and there.

"This is our first trip here. Hopefully we learned something and I think we did. It's awesome that our seniors got to be part of our first national tournament."

The Bulldogs found themselves in position to claim each set despite playing most of the day without senior Claire White who re-aggravated an ankle injury in both the first and second games. With White sidelined, sophomore Mikayla Higgins provided a spark. She landed kills on three of her first four swings to fuel an energized crowd that showed large even with students on Thanksgiving break.

In a contest that was dead-even from a statistical standpoint, the Tigers were just a bit cleaner. Sophomore outside hitter Jeslyn Roat enjoyed a big day with 13 kills on 26 swings. She drove a stake through the hearts of Concordia faithful with set-point kills in the first and second games. Roat's contributions were key on an evening when CCAC co-player of the year Becky DeRuiter was contained to the tune of eight kills and five total blocks.

Junior Paige Getz got increased opportunities on the outside for Concordia and floored a match-high 14 kills. Getz helped lead



the charge in the third set when she pummeled a kill to make it 20-16 in favor of the Bulldogs. She went for another that pushed the score to 21-18. Olivet Nazarene earned it down the stretch, racking up eight of its last 11 points of the third game on kills.

The Tigers picked up their eighth win all-time in national tournament play. Meanwhile, Concordia looks forward to 2016. Six of the Bulldogs' seven all-conference selections will return for a program that has improved each season under Mattera's direction.

"We're going to miss some leadership there. We're losing some very special kids," Mattera said. "But we also have a huge core coming back that's going to be even hungrier."

That core will include the likes of junior setter Alayna Kavanaugh (35 assists on Saturday) and sophomore defensive specialist Jocelyn Garcia (24 digs). Junior Taylor Workman, another key returning piece, posted 10 kills versus Olivet Nazarene. Higgins filled in superbly on the outside and chipped in nine kills.

Olivet Nazarene outhit Concordia .224 to .185. The Tigers held advantages of 48-44 in kills, 56-52 in digs and 8-7 in blocks.



FIVE VOLLEYBALL STUDENT ATHLETES COLLECT NAIA ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

SEWARD, Neb. – A quintet of Concordia University volleyball players have been named 2015 Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athletes, as announced by the NAIA on Friday. Among this year's honorees, seniors Katie Peterson, Kayla Sombke, Claire White and Libby Zagel are two-time scholar-athletes. Junior Naomi Quigg has earned the honor for the first time in her career.

Head coach Scott Mattera's Bulldogs led all NAIA volleyball programs in scholar-athletes in 2013 and 2014. This season the Bulldogs, which made their first-ever national tournament appearance, ranked third among GPAC institutions in scholar-athletes.

In order to be nominated by an institution's head coach or sports information director, a student-athlete must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and must have achieved a junior academic status. A total of 428 volleyball student-athletes across the nation were named scholar-athletes by the NAIA.

Concordia University ranks as the NAIA's all-time leader in number of Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athletes with 1,227 and counting. The 2014-15 season culminated with GPAC-leading totals of 94 Bulldog scholar-athletes and 17 NAIA Scholar-Teams. During the 2013-14 academic year, Concordia garnered 101 Scholar-Athlete honorees (most in the NAIA) and 17 NAIA Scholar-Teams (tied for fourth nationally).

Concordia University, Nebraska, founded in 1894, is a fully accredited, coeducational university located in Seward, Neb., that currently serves over 2,200 students. Concordia offers more than 50 professional and liberal arts programs in an excellent academic and Christ-centered community that equips men and women for lives of learning, service and leadership in the church and world.

2015 volleyball Scholar-Athletes

Katie Peterson | Sr. | Ord, Neb.
 Naomi Quigg | Jr. | Springfield, Ill.
 Kayla Sombke | Sr. | Indianapolis, Ind.
 Claire White | Sr. | Exeter, Neb.
 Libby Zagel | Sr. | Brighton, Colo.





AVCA NAMES GARCIA REGIONAL LIBERO OF THE YEAR, TWO OTHER BULLDOGS HONORED

SEWARD, Neb. – Three Concordia University volleyball student-athletes garnered regional honors from the American Volleyball Coaches Association, as announced on Monday. After a sparkling sophomore season, Jocelyn Garcia earned NAIA AVCA West Central Region Libero of the Year recognition. She was also named to the West Central Region team along with junior Alayna Kavanaugh. Sophomore Annie Friesen was tabbed honorable mention all-region.

Kavanaugh has received all-region honors for the second-straight season (honorable mention in 2014). Claire White also collected AVCA West Central Region team recognition in 2014.

A first team all-conference selection and three-time GPAC player of the week, Garcia took off while taking over the libero role in 2015. The native of Brighton, Colo., racked up a team high 559 digs for an average of 4.5 per set. Garcia posted a career best 27 digs in a five-set win over No. 20 Montana Tech. She piled up 20 or more digs on 11 occasions in 2015.

Kavanaugh, a two-time first team all-conference choice, helped drive Concordia to its first-ever national tournament appearance as the quarterback of the offensive attack. The Lincoln Christian High School product averaged 10.8 assists per game (12th most among all NAIA players). Kavanaugh was named the GPAC setter of the week four times this season. She totaled career highs in assists (1,331), kills (113), digs (245) and sets played (123).

Concordia's accomplished setter often found Friesen in the middle. It was a breakout campaign for the native of Wichita, Kan., who ranked eighth nationally in hitting percentage (.374). Friesen, a first team all-conference performer, starred as one of five Bulldog hitters with 240 or more kills. Her 313 kills far surpassed her total of 125 as a freshman. She also led Concordia with 113 total blocks (0.9 per game).

The Bulldogs finished the season at 26-9 overall. The campaign included a run to the GPAC tournament championship match.





GARCIA, KAVANAUGH COLLECT NAIA HONORABLE MENTION ALL-AMERICAN HONORS



3,386 career assists.

The last time a Bulldog volleyball player earned first, second or third team All-America laurels occurred in 2001 when current assistant coach Rachel (Kirchner) Miller was placed on the third team. Miller is a member of the Concordia Athletic Hall of Fame.

SEWARD, Neb. – Named to the AVCA's NAIA West Central All-Region team on Monday, sophomore Jocelyn Garcia and junior Alayna Kavanaugh reeled in more postseason recognition on Tuesday. Both Bulldogs garnered NAIA honorable mention All-America status, marking the second-straight season Concordia has placed a representative on the list. Claire White received the same distinction in 2014.

Garcia, who hails from Brighton, Colo., earned West Central Region Libero of the Year accolades on Monday thanks to a sterling sophomore season that included first team all-conference honors and three GPAC defensive player of the week awards. Garcia racked up a team high 559 digs for an average of 4.5 per set. Garcia posted a career best 27 digs in a five-set win over No. 20 Montana Tech. She piled up 20 or more digs on 11 occasions in 2015.

Kavanaugh, a two-time first team all-conference choice, helped drive Concordia to its first-ever national tournament appearance as the quarterback of the offensive attack. The Lincoln Christian High School product averaged 10.8 assists per game (12th most among all NAIA players). Kavanaugh was named the GPAC setter of the week four times this season. She totaled career highs in assists (1,331), kills (113), digs (245) and sets played (123) in 2015. She has amassed



'SPECIAL GROUP' MAKES FOR SPECIAL YEAR

By Jake Knabel, Director of Athletic Communications

The current class of Concordia volleyball seniors knows exactly what it's like to watch a program rise from near the bottom of the conference to the heights of a national tournament berth. The 2012 squad finished head coach Scott Mattera's first season at 10-21 overall. What a difference three years makes.

On Nov. 16 members of the team gathered on campus to learn their national tournament fate. The room of Bulldogs erupted when the NAIA rewarded Concordia with its first-ever national championships berth. Mattera's bunch earned it with 26 victories, including six over ranked opponents. Make no mistake, Bulldog volleyball is a national player.

Said Mattera in an interview with 104.9 Max Country, "I thought if we stayed healthy and stayed together we could be a top 20 team in the country. That's exactly what we did. We got into that top-20 range and we stayed relatively healthy and definitely stayed together. In terms of what we're capable of there was some could-of, should-of, but that's part of sports. I don't think we can scoff at the history we made this year. It was a really special group of girls."

That special group included five attackers who pasted at least 240 kills, a setter (Alayna Kavanaugh) who earned her second-straight first team all-conference honor and a defensive specialist (Jocelyn Garcia) who was named the AVCA NAIA West Central Region Libero of the Year. A balanced team with no glaring weaknesses made good on the unfinished business left behind by past Concordia volleyball teams that fell just short of reaching the national stage.

Though the Bulldogs fell to Olivet Nazarene University in the opening round of the national championships, the 2015 season will be remembered more for its many thrilling moments. There was the 6-0 start and then impressive road wins at No. 11

Northwestern and No. 2 Midland, which had run off 22-straight wins to start the season before meeting up with Concordia.

"Going to Northwestern and getting that win there and going to Midland and getting that win there – those are big time," Mattera said. "Now we know we've done it before and we can do it again. In those matches it wasn't one particular thing that won the match. It was different people stepping up at different times. Team chemistry and diversity of offense and different players just doing their jobs together is what got us through that. That's how you win those matches."

Along the way, the Bulldogs had a ball. They swept through a Chicago trip that included a boat ride along the Chicago River, waited for Annie Friesen to do something weird and turned almost every postgame interview into a circus. It wasn't hard

to be captivated by a bunch that won while doing so in entertaining fashion. This team knew how to celebrate a big point. Looking at you, Claire White.

"I think our team chemistry this year was probably the best it's ever been," said junior Tiegen Skains. "A lot of us have been on the court together since our freshman year.

Jocelyn and Annie

fit right in, too. We always have fun off the court which makes it easier. We know we can trust each other on the court. We have fun no matter what. We always play better when we're having fun."

In turn, the Bulldogs gave their fans plenty to celebrate. No team in the GPAC played more home matches this season than Concordia, which treated its fans 17 times inside Walz Arena. It's there were the Bulldogs clinched their first-ever journey to the GPAC championship match. They toppled No. 17 Northwestern in a quarterfinal gotta-have-it contest. Concordia then held off Cinderella story College of Saint Mary in the semifinals to earn another date at Midland.

Season-closing losses at Midland and to Olivet Nazarene won't





year of a career that has seen her get better every season. The 2016 cupboard will be stocked with six returning all-conference players to combine with the incoming class of recruits.

“We’re really excited,” Mattera said. “We’re bringing in some kids who will make an immediate impact. But when you’re returning six all-conference players there’s not as much room as there are some years. I think people will be impressed with this recruiting class.”

Considering what 2015 brought, the 2016 season will have a lot to live up to. Said Getz earlier this season, “This has been one of the most fun seasons just because we know we can beat anybody.” With the wealth of talent and experience set to return, that mindset, which did not exist in 2012, is

overshadow what the fun-loving 2015 group accomplished. Sure there were tears. No one wanted a ride that exhilarating to end.

unlikely to change. Is it August 2016 yet?

“Our seniors that started off with me back in my first year suffered through 10-21 together and wondered if we’d ever be able to do this thing,” Mattera said. “They bought into what we were doing and our culture just took off in terms of why we play. Why we play isn’t for 26 wins. The tears in the locker room after that game from our seniors are a really good thing. It wouldn’t hurt that it was over unless it was a great experience. It was such a great group. We’re really proud of what we’ve done.”

Concordia will miss the leadership of a senior class that helped the program bump its win total from 10 to 17 to 20 to 26 over the past four years. They will certainly miss White’s production in almost every facet of the game (1,033 kills, 926 digs and 130 aces as a Bulldog).

But the bulk of the team returns. Junior Paige Getz is on the cusp of 1,000 career kills and Friesen and Garcia, both sophomores, blossomed into stars in 2015. At setter, Kavanaugh will return for the final





VOLLEYBALL FINISHES SEASON WITH TOP-25 RANKING FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2000

SEWARD, Neb. – On Wednesday the 2015 Concordia University volleyball team made its 10th-straight appearance in the national polls. With a postseason ranking of 22nd, the Bulldogs finished a season with a top-25 national ranking for the first time since the 2000 squad shared the GPAC regular-season title. That team, coached by Becky Ernstmeyer, finished at No. 18.

The fourth season of Bulldog volleyball under head coach Scott Mattera concluded with a record of 26-9 overall, six victories over ranked opponents and a trip to the GPAC championship match. Concordia rose as high as 15th in the coaches' poll. In the GPAC era, the Bulldogs have been ranked as high as No. 12 (September 2000).

Postseason honors rolled in this week for several members of the team. Sophomore Jocelyn Garcia collected AVCA NAIA West Central Region Libero of the Year recognition in addition to NAIA honorable mention All-America laurels. Junior Alayna Kavanaugh was also named an honorable mention All-American and a member of the all-region team. Sophomore Annie Friesen appeared among the list of honorable mentions on the AVCA all-region group. Six of Concordia's seven all-conference players will return in 2016.





ALL-CONFERENCE TRI-COACH OF THE YEAR

Scott Mattera

1ST TEAM

Annie Friesen

Jocelyn Garcia

Alayna Kavanaugh

2ND TEAM

Paige Getz

Claire White

HONORABLE MENTION

Tiegen Skains

Taylor Workman

SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

Katie Peterson

Naomi Quigg

Kayla Sombke

Claire White

Libby Zagel



ALL-WEST CENTRAL REGION TEAM

Jocelyn Garcia (Libero of the year)

Alayna Kavanaugh

HONORABLE MENTION

Annie Friesen

NAIA ALL-AMERICA HONORABLE MENTION

Jocelyn Garcia

Alayna Kavanaugh



