

Another good tourney run for Marion

Written by Tom Fruehling

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The way Marion volleyball coach Roxanne Paulsen figures it, going up against tough competition early in the season will only make her team stronger in the end.

And while the Indians' 8-5 record may not show it, she says they're getting better and better.

"We've been playing some good quality teams," Paulsen said late Saturday afternoon. "The kids are learning some things they need to do before we get into the regionals.

"But we still have a young team, and we're improving."

On Saturday at the Linn-Mar Invitational, the Indians got whopped 25-10, 25-10 by 4A powerhouse Pleasant Valley in the championship semifinals.

Pleasant Valley proceeded to win the title by beating Dubuque Hempstead in a barnburner of a three-game finale and finished the day with six straight victories.

For Hempstead, meanwhile, it was the only loss in the 12-team tourney. To reach the finals, the Mustangs squeaked by previously unbeaten 3A giant Solon 25-21, 25-22.

In the 4A-dominated Washington Warrior meet a week ago, Solon defeated Marion 16-14 in the

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tiebreaker to claim the tournament championship.



Marion's path Saturday through pool play into the championship bracket started with relatively easy wins over Springville and Iowa City Regina before running into another buzzsaw against the nemesis Solon girls.

The Indians took the first game 21-15, lost the second by the same score, then dropped the tiebreaker 15-12. They rebounded in the championship quarterfinals, however, by thumping 4A host Linn-Mar 25-17, 25-16.

"We had a good showing in the last two tournaments," Paulsen said. "The girls need to think more. And they need to go for the kills when we have them."

Of Marion's five losses this season, two have been to Solon, two to 4A Pleasant Valley and Johnston, and one to perennial 2A power Dyersville Beckman. Last Tuesday, they pulled off a hard-fought, five-game match against Clear Creek Amana.

Paulsen looks for two more challenging dual matches next week at Independence and at home against Williamsburg.

"In most of our losses against some good teams, we've had close matches," she said. "The kids are getting better."

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Pool A

1. Dubuque Hempstead (3-0)
2. Vinton-Shellsburg (2-1)
3. Cedar Rapids Prairie (1-2)
4. Center Point-Urbana (0-3)

Pool B

1. Solon (3-0)
2. Marion (2-1)
3. Iowa City Regina (1-2)
4. Springville (0-3)

Pool C

1. Pleasant Valley (3-0)
2. Linn-Mar (2-1)
3. Waterloo East (1-2)
4. North Tama (0-3)

Consolation Bracket

Iowa City Regina def Center Point-Urbana 15-25, 25-16, 15-11

Springville def North Tama 19-25, 27-25, 15-9

Iowa City Regina def Springville 25-18, 22-25, 15-9

Quarterfinals

Pleasant Valley def Waterloo East 25-11, 25-8

Marion def Linn-Mar 25-17, 25-16

Solon def Cedar Rapids Prairie 22-25, 25-13, 15-9

Dubuque Hempstead def Vinton-Shellsburg 25-9, 25-17

Semifinals

Pleasant Valley def Marion 25-10, 25-15

Dubuque Hempstead def Solon 25-21, 25-22

Championship Game

Pleasant Valley def Dubuque Hempstead 25-12, 23-25, 15-12