

Saints fall short against IC West

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 21 September 2016 04:42 -



Xavier Coach Austin Filer liked the way his club rallied against Iowa City West Tuesday night, but he did not like the way the Saints fell behind so quickly in several of the sets.

The Saints put up a good fight before falling short, 25-23, 25-23, 13-25, 25-21, in a battle of ranked Mississippi Valley Conference volleyball teams at the Ron Thillen Gymnasium.

Xavier is ranked No. 6 in Class 4A and Iowa City West is ranked No. 11 in Class 5A. Both teams are threats to reach the state tournament in November, but Filer thinks his team needs to learn a few more lessons along the way.

The Saints began the season with 18 straight victories, including some impressive triumphs over ranked Class 5A opponents, but they've lost their last two outings against Marion (ranked No. 3 in Class 4A) and Iowa City West.

The Saints committed too many service errors against Iowa City West and failed to capitalize on other opportunities.

"We played really young tonight," said Filer, who has only two seniors on the roster. "We let our opponent get out to big leads and then halfway through the set when we were down 17-7 or 13-6 we said, 'Hey, it's go time.'"

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"We showed that we could pull back in, but we talked a lot that we have to control every single play that we can control. We need to start matches off a little better."

The first two sets were carbon copies of each other. The Saints dug a deep hole early in both sets and rallied to tie 23-23, but Iowa City West scored the last two points for 25-23 victories.

The Saints really clicked in the third set for their 25-13 verdict, but the visitors regained control in the fourth set and held off another Saints rally for a 25-21 victory.

"West is a great team," said Filer, in his first year at Xavier. "Their record (10-8) doesn't showcase the ability they have. They have eight kids that are going to play in college next year, and probably a few juniors and a few sophomores that are going to play as well."

Charlotte Richards hit some vicious shots and finished with 21 kills for Xavier, according to unofficial statistics. Ellie McDermott also had a big night with 14 kills and some nasty serves. Olivia Richards had eight kills for the Saints.



McDermott did not play against Marion in the championship match of the Benton Community tournament on Saturday due to an injury.

Filer has great respect for Iowa City West, a traditional state power, but is not modeling his program after theirs.

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"We want to set our own trail and blaze our own path," he remarked. "The girls are still learning how to be winners sometimes and it's going to take some time. I have to accept that.

"Our losses to Marion the other and our loss today show us that we have to swing high. Every loss we take is only going to make us better in the long run.

"You can tell the girls all day long, 'Hey, this is what we need to do,' but until a loss comes as a result their minds are not always open that we have to learn. We're learning a lot, we're growing up a lot every single day."