

No.7 Eagles raise record to 11-1

Written by Jim Ecker

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Some colleges invite a bunch of weak teams to their tournament and call it a Classic, but that's not how it works for the Kirkwood volleyball program.

The Eagles invited the very best Division II teams in the midwest to their tournament this weekend and got a good idea of where they stand against quality competition.

As it turns out, the Eagles are in good shape.

The tournament featured No.1 Parkland, No.2 Cowley, No.3 Johnson County, No.4 Illinois Central and No.17 Iowa Central, along with Lincoln Land and Central (Neb.).

Kirkwood compiled a 3-1 record in the tournament with victories over Cowley, Iowa Central and Lincoln Land, with the lone loss to Illinois Central.

"What a great tournament," said KCC Coach Jill Williams. "Everybody was battling it out."

Williams, in her 10th year at Kirkwood, said she's not interested in whipping a bunch of overmatched clubs.

"It doesn't do us any good," she said. "It's fun. It's fun to play the best, then you know where you're really at."

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Kirkwood began the tournament Friday with a 25-19, 27-25, 21-25, 25-23 victory over Lincoln Land, followed by a 25-23, 25-21, 25-22 conquest of No.2 Cowley.

The Eagles rallied for a dramatic 25-15, 18-25, 19-25, 26-24, 15-13 victory over Iowa Central in their first match Saturday, then ended the tournament with a 22-25, 25-19, 27-25, 25-23 setback to No. 4 Illinois Central.

Kirkwood had a chance to finish 4-0 in the tournament, but a few breakdowns cost them a chance against Illinois Central. "It was our own errors," said Williams. "We had opportunities."

Williams is delighted with an 11-1 overall record at this point, especially with only two returning starters and 11 new players on the club.

"You've got to feel awesome," she said. "Probably a month ago I wasn't too sure what the opening of the season would be like."

Heather Poula collected 19 kills against Iowa Central. Erin Wenzel had 12 kills and Halle Lueck contributed 42 assists.

Poula had 18 more kills in the loss to Illinois Central. Nicole Snyder had 17 digs and Lueck had 42 more assist.