

BC3 volleyball team Region XX champs for 3rd time in 4 years

Oct. 29, 2018



Members of the Butler County Community College volleyball team are shown Saturday in Arnold, Md., after the Pioneers beat Anne Arundel Community College 3-1 to win their third National Junior College Athletic Association Division III Region XX crown in four years. Front row, from left, Madison Morella, Makenzie McDowell, Haley Caldwell and Emilee Beck. Back row, from left, assistant coach Baylee Verner, assistant coach Bri Bedillion, Emily Magusiak, Mackenzie Craig, Abby Kopac, Kaylee Ebbert, Brooke Snow, assistant coach Jen Barry, assistant coach Autumn Rodgers and head coach Rob Snyder.

(Arnold, MD) Mackenzie Craig had 33 assists and Kaylee Ebbert a season-high 28 digs as the Butler County Community College volleyball team on Saturday beat Anne Arundel Community College 3-1 to win its third National Junior College Athletic Association Division III Region XX crown in four years and ninth since 1999 under coach Rob Snyder.

Emily Magusiak added 31 digs and 11 kills for the Pioneers, who beat Anne Arundel 25-17, (15-25), 25-20 and 25-17 and moved to 18-5 with their sixth consecutive victory.

The Pioneers on Friday and Saturday will host the six-team NJCAA Division III District I-J Tournament – whose finalists advance to the NJCAA Division III national championship at the UCR Regional Sports Center, Rochester, Minn., from Nov. 8-10.

Among the squads competing at BC3 this weekend is Owens Community College, of Perrysburg, Ohio. The Region XII champions (32-6) are ranked No. 1 among 99 teams in the NJCAA's Division III and in 2017 were national runners-up in Division II.

Abby Kopac, a Knoch High graduate, added nine kills Saturday for the Pioneers, and with Magusiak, of New Castle, and Ebbert, of Mars, was named to the NJCAA Division III Region XX all-tournament team. Craig, of Karns City, was selected as the tournament's most valuable player.

“A huge turning point”

With the score tied at one game apiece, Anne Arundel in Game 3 pulled to an 18-16 deficit, but Kopac noticed the Riverhawks' lineup was out of rotation.

“She called to me and said, ‘Check their lineup,’” Snyder said. “So we checked the lineup with the officials and (Anne Arundel) had the wrong server.”

One point was awarded to BC3 and one deducted from Anne Arundel, giving the Pioneers a 19-15 advantage.

“That,” Snyder said, “was a huge turning point. A smart play by someone who was paying attention. In a really close game, one point is a huge deal. But a two-point swing is a huge momentum shift. You don't want to lose that third game and get down 2-1.”

Ebbert, whose previous high in digs was 20, matched well against Brittney Guy, who leads Anne Arundel with 188 kills in 2018.

“Kaylee was absolutely a factor, especially in the last game,” Snyder said. “She had some really big stops when we needed them against their best player. We had a plan to stop (Guy) but we weren't able to shut her down too much.”

Twelve of Ebbert's digs came in the fourth and deciding game.

“We obviously did not want to lose that and go to a fifth game,” Snyder said. “She picked up some really tough balls.”

BC3 will face tough competition in the NJCAA Division III District I-J Tournament, Snyder said.

“We have to be really sharp,” said Snyder, who Saturday moved his career record through 20 seasons at BC3 to 374-126. “We are going to have to serve aggressively and hit more aggressively.

“Normally my strategy is for us to make fewer mistakes than the other team does because that puts a lot of pressure on them. I don’t think that is going to work with these teams. We need to score points by being aggressive and taking more chances than we normally do.”

Pioneers face Virginia squad in opener

Six matches will be played on two courts inside BC3’s Field House at 2 p.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Friday. Semifinals will be held on two courts at 10 a.m. Saturday, with the championship set for 1 p.m. All matches in the tournament will be best-of-five.

The Pioneers face Patrick Henry Community College (8-13) of Martinsville, Va., the runner-up in the NJCAA’s Division III Region X, at 2 p.m. Friday.

In addition to BC3, other regional champions in the tournament are Sandhills Community College (23-3) of Pinehurst, N.J., Region X; and Owens Community College.

In addition to Patrick Henry, other regional runners-up in the tournament are Lorain County Community College (20-10) of Elyria, Ohio, Region XII, which is coming off a 3-2 upset victory Saturday over Columbus State Community College, ranked No. 3 nationally; and Anne Arundel, which fell to 6-12 after its loss to BC3.

The Pioneers on Oct. 20 won their fourth consecutive Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship, 10th under Snyder and 15th since 1977.

Eastfield College (24-9) of Mesquite, Texas, the defending Division III national champion, beat Brookhaven College, Farmers Branch, Texas, on Saturday in the Region V final.

Other members of the Pioneers volleyball team are Makenzie McDowell, Knoch; Emilee Beck, Butler; Haley Caldwell, Butler; Madison Morella, Lincoln in Ellwood City; and Brooke Snow, Karns City.