



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Junior Taylor Young went up to place a ball during the Eagles semifinal match with Oakley. The Eagles defeated the Plainsmen in two games (25-18, 25-5).



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Eagles, #21 Jordan Krzycki and #30 Taylor Young, gave high-fives to the crowd following Colby's championship game victory over Wheatland/Grinnell Saturday in Oakley.

## Lady Eagle spikers avenge Wheatland loss

By Joey Falkoff

Free Press Reporter  
j.falkoff@nwkanas.com

OAKLEY-The Homecoming dance may have been three hours away, but the party began a little early for the Colby Lady Eagle volleyball team, who won the Oakley Invitational Tournament Saturday by avenging their Sept. 22 loss to 1A #1 ranked and undefeated Wheatland/Grinnell, beating the Thunderhawks in the finals (25-22, 26-24).

Ironically, it may have been the Eagles motivation to get to the dance that proved the difference in this match. After a long first game, the Eagles knew they were running low on time to get back to Colby to get ready for the dance.

"The girls said to me in the huddle before the second game they wanted to end this in two, so they could get to the dance," said Wagoner. "They went out and did it."

Although probably not as quickly as they would have liked, the Eagles fought their way back from a five point deficit to beat the Thunderhawks in two. The team posed for some pictures afterward, but it was obvious what their minds were on.

"It's now 5:37 and the dance starts at 8:30," said senior Lissa Mazanec minutes after the match. "I'm going to get back, shower, get some supper and get ready for tonight."

The tournament victory capped off an unforgettable weekend for Mazanec, who was named Colby's Homecoming Queen after the football game Friday.

"It's been a long week for me, but this was a great way to end it," said Mazanec.

Things didn't look so promising for Mazanec and the rest of the Eagles early in the match. A serving error by Mazanec gave the Thunderhawks an early 8-4 lead. Three straight kills by Taylor Young, April Gee and Jordan Krzycki, along with an ace from Kiri Kendrick tied the match 10-10.

The Eagles took their first lead on the next point, but it, along with every other lead in this match was short-lived. The Thunderhawks regained the advantage and led 19-16 after a hitting error on Colby.

The Eagles rallied to tie the game at 21-21, but a kill from Wheatland's Brooke Evans allowed the Thunderhawks to regain a 22-21 lead. As it turned out, that would be last the point the Eagles would allow in the game.

Mazanec tied the match on a kill down the middle, but it was Mazanec's unexpected kill on the next point that turned the game Colby's way. Mazanec took a pass from Krzycki and accidentally bumped it over the net. The Eagles got a break, though, as Mazanec's ball was perfectly placed and landed for a kill, giving the Eagles a 23-22 lead.

Mazanec ended the first game a couple points later with a more traditional kill on an assist from Krzycki.

The second game started in much the same way for the Eagles, as they trailed early on 10-5. Colby rallied by scoring six of the next seven points to tie the game at 11-11, and a stuff from Mazanec gave the Eagles their first lead, 15-14. Colby built their lead up to 19-14, following a Leah Cox kill, but the Thunderhawks cut the advantage to 21-20 thanks to a Meagan Weaver ace.

The Eagles appeared to be los-



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Eagle hitter Lissa Mazanec went up for a kill in Colby's semifinal match with Oakley Saturday. Mazanec had four kills in the match.

ing their focus after a ball landed between four Colby players to tie the match at 23-23. Krzycki picked up her teammates by drilling a hit on the next point, giving the Eagles a match point.

But Weaver answered with her sixth kill of the match to keep the Thunderhawks alive. Cox, however, would not let this game slip away, as she came up big with two kills on the last two points to give the Eagles a hard-fought two-game victory.

"It feels pretty good to achieve that," said Cox. "There's definitely more than one person that makes a win like that possible. I was just able to focus, and I really knew what I wanted."

"I told the girls during one of our timeouts they needed to stop placing balls and start putting them away," said Wagoner. "Leah did an awesome job for us and played the net really well."

Saturday's match between the Eagles and Thunderhawks played out much like their first match Sept. 22, but it was some of the adjustments the Eagles made in practice last week that Wagoner believed made the difference.

"We worked on playing the net tough and putting in their weakest players hands," said Wagoner.

"This is the first team I've had that can implement everything we work on in practice into a match. We didn't feel we played up to our potential the first time we played them, and we thought we'd have a good chance of matching up with them again today."

Wheatland head coach Rose Packard felt her team played on the defensive in this match compared to last week.

"We played not to lose instead of playing to win," said Packard.

"Colby's so scrappy, and we didn't react to them as well as last week. Give them credit for being aggressive."

Against Wheatland, Mazanec led the way in kills with eight. She was followed by Krzycki with six, Young with five, Cox with four and April Gee and Tasha Wagoner with three. Wagoner was the assist leader for the Eagles, finishing with 11.

Krzycki was second with six and Kirstie Strutt had one in the second game. Five different Eagles finished with an ace, and Mazanec led the team in blocks with two.

The Eagles were able to get their second crack at Wheatland/Grinnell after they manhandled the host team, Oakley, (25-18, 25-5) in the semifinals.

The Plainsmen played the Eagles tough in Hoxie Sept. 13, but after having a valiant comeback fall short in the first game, the Plainsmen hardly put up a fight in game two.

The Eagles jumped ahead in the second game 12-1, lost four of the next five points and then won the final 12 points to win one of their most lopsided matches of the year.

The first game was tied 10-10 nearly half way through, but the Eagles turned it on and took a commanding 19-12 lead. Oakley's Kimber Weiser used her fourth kill of the game to cut the lead to 21-18. Wagoner called a timeout to refocus her team and it paid off. The Eagles won the final four points on a stuff from Mazanec, two kills from Young and ace from Mazanec to close out the game.

Young led the Eagles in kills against Oakley with six. She was

followed by Krzycki with five, Mazanec with four and Gee with one. Wagoner was the team's assist leader with 10. Cox was the only other Eagle to have an assist. She finished with one. Gee and Young tied for the team lead in blocks with four. Mazanec added three.

In pool play, the Eagles finished 3-0 by defeating Scott City (25-22, 25-21), Thomas More Prep-Marian (Hays) (25-9, 25-16) and Quinter (25-8, 25-7). Quinter was no match for the much crisper Eagles.

The Eagles scored 15 of the last 16 points in their first game win and 17 of the first 20 points in their second game victory.

Mazanec was the hitting leader for the Eagles, finishing with seven kills. Wagoner led in assists with seven, and Krzycki and Mazanec tied for the lead in blocks with two.

"We knew we had an extremely easy pool," said Wagoner.

"Our biggest competitors were Scott City and we had already seen them before. We wanted to play at our level, instead of playing down to the competition. I thought the girls really did that."

The Eagles showed the ability Saturday to turn their level of play up when they need to, which should come in handy for Colby 4 p.m. Tuesday when travel to Hays for a quad that features Hays High, Phillipsburg and Liberal, the only team besides Wheatland to knock off the Eagles this year.

Colby, now 18-2 on the season, lost their #2 state ranking after their loss to Wheatland in Goodland. Saturday was sweet revenge for the Eagles, but their season series may not be over yet.

The Eagles and Thunderhawks could meet up for a third time in the Scotty City tournament Saturday should both teams make the finals again.

"I guess that will be the rubber match," said Packard. "It should be a lot of fun again."

## Eagle Royalty



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Eagle senior running back Mitchell Tuma and senior volleyball player Lissa Mazanec were named the 2007 homecoming king and queen after the Eagles game with Oakley Friday at Dennen Field.

## Trojans fall to 15-14

The Lady Trojans (15-14, 2-2) dropped four matches this weekend, and in three of the four matches they faced ranked opponents. They lost to defending National Champion Iowa Western in the opening match on Friday (28-30, 12-30, 18-30). Iowa Western is currently ranked No. 6 in the latest NJCAA poll.

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