



THE OBERLIN 2006, Northwest Kansas League volleyball championship starting team — Tricia Dorshorst (back left), Heather Williams (front left), Lacy Ream (left middle), Sarah Murray (center), Emmie Pauls (right) and Lauren Fortin (far right) lined up at the state meet. — Photo by Sarah Fredrickson

League honors players

The Northwest Kansas League has selected four Decatur Community High volleyball players from the league champion, 31-0, team to the all-league team.

Seniors Tricia Dorshorst, Heather Williams and Lauren Fortin were selected to the first team.

Senior Emmie Pauls was selected as an honorable mention candidate.

Other all-league players include Lissa Mazanec, Rishonna Martin and Jenna Johnson, Colby; Megann Dennis, Callie Baalman and Lindsey Hubert, Oakley; Megan Cahoj and Sara Miller, Rawlins County; and Tiffany Goetz, Hoxie.

We'll put our volleyball girls up against any in state

Fans will always argue that the brand of volleyball in their part of the state is superior to other leagues and other teams.

In the case of the Oberlin Lady Red Devils, who finished the season 32-2 with their only two losses at the state tournament, no one can argue that they finished with the highest winning percentage in Class 3A with a 97.8 percent winning average.

Whether it was the long bus ride to Salina, pregame jitters, over-aggressive play, or the 31-game undefeated winning streak hanging over their heads going into the tournament, thing just happened.

Oberlin dropped the first match in



The Jayhawker

By *Jim Merriott*
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pool play to Osage City 25-17, 24-26, and 17-25.

In a rematch of last year, the Red Devils fought the Eagles tooth and nail in a battle either team could have won.

The Oberlin girls lost their second match 23-25, 25-19, and 25-27 in

overtime against the Eagles, who finished as runners-up to state champion Silver Lake.

The southeastern representative in the tournament, the Frontenac Raiders, proved no contest to the superior Decatur Community High team, losing a two set match 25-10

and 25-12 proving that it makes no difference which part of the state a team comes from.

Over the years, tournament champions are the team that finds its groove the quickest. All records are thrown out, as the state tournament amounts to a new season. Silver Lake is the perfect example of a team that got hot in the tournament, finishing the season with a 28-10 record but taking the state title, its third title in four years.

What builds a strong program is a winning tradition, and that is developed by the whole town, not just the team.

True, a team must have talent, work hard and develop teamwork,

but what makes a champion trickles down from community involvement. Examples of this are Smith Center and Pittsburg-Colgan in football, programs with a rich tradition that goes back for decades.

Silver Lake has found that formula in the past few years.

What Oberlin people must realize is that our teams have established their own identity and no one can take that away from us.

It makes no difference what fans think about the competition the Northwest Kansas League produces. The brand of volleyball this part of the state produces is top notch in every way.

Only when fans have experienced

the agony of defeat and the thrill of victory as athletes drain every ounce of effort out of their bodies do they truly understand what a winner is.

A winner is a team that gives everything they have and leaves it on the field, the track or the court, whether they win the game or not. Sports prepare kids for life's battles, which are far more important than the results of a game.

I tip my hat to Patricia Dorshorst and her Lady Devils. No one will ever be able to take away the tremendous season they had. There are 63 other teams in Class 3A who wish they had that record.

Congratulations!

Time to go fishing, hunting at Milford

By **JIM MERRIOTT**

Charley, my dog, and I headed east this time on our "Great Kansas Getaways" trip, to Wakefield and Milford on Milford Lake.

These two towns adjoin Milford Wildlife Area, Milford State Park and the lake. I learned that Milford is the largest reservoir in the state. I had always figured that Tuttle Creek was, but I was wrong.

At one point, looking west on the causeway that carries K-82 across the lake to Wakefield, it looked like the Lake of the Ozarks. Milford's high limestone cliffs make it a perfect setting for cabins and walleye.

These crumbling cliff areas make perfect cover for crawdads and bait fish which the majority of sport fish thrive on.

Smallmouth bass, walleye, white bass and largemouth bass hang out in the cliff areas. Deep below feeding off the bottom, wipers, flathead and channel cat catch any leftover tasty morsels.

Milford is probably best known for its large white and black crappie populations, with lots of crappie in the three-pound range.

This was kind of a mixed trip, as I also hunted dove west of the lake.

The cold front that passed through the first week of September didn't seem to affect my hunting. The damp, moist fields of early morning left haze in the air which must have helped, as I limited out in an hour.

One morning, after breakfast, Charley went to chase seagulls off the beach just east of Walnut Grove Campground so I could wet a line.

Several bass boats trolled passed. With the cold front past, I figured if the barometer stabilized, it just might be possible to catch a few palate pleasers from the rock shore.

The day before, I had stopped by the Rush Creek Marina to ask how the fishing had been.

I found I had entered cheeseburger paradise. The marina is the home of the "27-second" cheeseburger. The sign says world-famous, which I question, unless their world just covers Wakefield and Milford, but in under a minute I had disposed of the first one and asked for another.

After filling up, I got some to go and headed up the gangplank back to my impatient wonderdog.

Over the years, I have learned that a good hunting dog can be as good a friend as it gets, so I unwrapped two burgers.

What I realized is that it may only take 27 seconds to cook a burger at the Rush Creek Marina, but it will only take a dog 10 seconds to eat.

After two Roloids, we were on our

way, checking out our camping area and headed to the Milford Nature Center and fish hatchery.

The center is on the spillway side (the outlet) of the dam. Here, the Republican River flows in a canal. The center, operated by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, gives visitors a better understanding and appreciation of Kansas nature. An underwater display contains over 300 models of fish, turtles, crawdads and insect larvae.

It has terrestrial dioramas featuring wildlife of the prairies, marshes and woodlands with over 50 species of plants and animals.

What I enjoyed most were the live-animal exhibits featuring native species, including lizards, frogs, prairie dogs and birds. The center is open all year long from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the week and it's open from 1 to 5 p.m. on weekends between June and October. Admission is free.

After my tour, I let Charley run for a while through the prairie grass just southeast of the center. As we walked on the River Walk trail, a covey of quail flushed to our left.

After our hike, I headed over to the hatchery for a tour only to find it closed. I guess it is only open during the week, but I couldn't find any signs. This gave me reason to return sometime before the walleye spawn in the spring.

Milford State Park has cabins for rent. They can be reserved year-round. Check in is 2 p.m. and check-out is noon.

Reservations are accepted by phone, mail or in person. If you call, have a credit card ready.

The beds have mattresses, but no bedding. The cabins look cozy, with a picnic table and patio outside along with a fire pit. During the prime season, fees are \$60 per day. During the off-season, they run \$45.

The cabins hold four comfortably with a bathroom and shower, microwave, refrigerator and kitchenette. Pets must be on a leash not longer than 10 feet. Write Milford State Park, 8811 State Park Rd., Milford, Kan., 66514 or call (785) 238-3014.

There is a nonrefundable reservation fee of \$10, and a damage deposit of \$65 which is refundable.

So if you are looking for a short vacation, Milford is the place to check out.

Jim Merriott has been a professional outdoor writer for over 20 years. He has written for outdoor magazines including Great Plains Game & Fish magazine, Hunting and Fishing News and Colorado Outdoors Magazine.

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