

THREE TWO ONE

Three girls, two teams, and one game that would change everything

When the season started, the thought of sobbing on the sidelines after the third round of playoffs wasn't something seniors Faith Lipham, Carley Barrett and Brette Wacha expected to be doing.

But there they were on the court, crying, hugging, and taking in the thought of playing their last volleyball game together.

It took a while to sink in that the season was over.

"It was my turn to set and when I turned around, Blair and the others were already crying," Faith said. "It didn't upset me at first. It made me mad that they had given up, but it was the last point and then I realized that there was nothing we could do."

After finishing second in district and making the playoffs for more than 20 years in a row, things

changed for the team.

"We weren't expecting to go to playoffs because of our rough preseason," Brette said. "But when we made it to the first round, we all decided that we needed to get it together and put in our best effort."

Before the season began, the three seniors weren't even sure they were going to play their last year of high school. But they had played passionately and intensely for six years in a row and it had become something they were expected to do, something they wanted to finish. There was no point to not playing their senior year.

"Playing volleyball was a routine for me," Carley said. "Quitting something that had become a big part of my life didn't seem like something that I could easily do."

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The team finished second in district to North Lamar and headed to the postseason. In the second round, the Lady Hawks faced Canton, a team that they thought was unbeatable. The Gazette picked Canton to win, but things turned out differently.

"The other team had a girl who was 6'2" and she was intimidating," junior Abbey Harjo said. "We practiced longer than normal that week, and before the game, Coach [Amy] Collvins told us to play carefully and not give her anything she could hit."

After the big win against Canton, they moved onto the third round of playoffs.

And that meant they would face the second ranked team in the state: Gilmer.

The Lady Hawks had already played Gilmer once during the season and beat them, but this time more was at stake.

After losing by only three points in the first two sets of the game, the girls thought they had a chance to come back.

But as they began to fall behind in the third set of the game, they knew that the win just wasn't meant to be.

"It was sad because this was my last year with this group of seniors. I've watched them grow up," Coach Collvins said. "After the game, I spoke with each of the three girls and hugged them and then I walked to the bathroom to wipe away all my tears. They had surpassed all of my expectations."

Pages by Allison Michaelis, Audrey Murphy, and Allison Steed



"Playing all the way around is challenging because I get tired at times, but I love it."
Britton Anderson (10)

3 Before the game, Coach Amy Collvins recognizes her three senior players, Brette Wacha, Carley Barrett, and Faith Lipham during Senior Night activities at the last home volleyball game. "I choke up a little bit when I think about them leaving. They've been a huge part of my life for seven years," Coach Collvins said. (AClark) 4 In a close game, seniors Brette Wacha and Carley Barrett and junior Anna Miller cover sophomore Britton Anderson to keep Liberty Eylau's hitter from scoring a point. "Normally I'm not scared to set the ball, but it was a really close game and L.E. had a really good hitter that intimidated me," Britton said. "When I went up to set or hit, I was really cautious because I didn't want her to make a kill that could've helped them win the game." The Lady Hawks won the game in five sets. (KMccorkle)

Special Instructions

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