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Cougar volleyball team makes history with last home game

athletics

October 6, 2011

KOKOMO, Ind. – Years from now, when followers of Indiana University Kokomo athletics look back on the 2011 volleyball season, the October 6 win over Trine University will be more than just another game. More than just a footnote in the initial season for women’s volleyball, it will be part of history.



(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iukokomo/sets/72157627835667820/>)

The Cougar team and coach Snoddy celebrate the home game win.

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“This night will go down in history as the last home game of the first team,” Chancellor Michael Harris told the crowd after the game. “People will talk about it for years to come.”

The names Krista Armstrong, Shelby Spall, Payton Landseadel, Emily West, Lael Burris, Jenna Pelling, Rachael Williams, Alex Wylie and Lizz Barney will be remembered for treading on new ground. They were ones that took the leap for all future athletic teams at IU Kokomo.

“We are playing with more and more confidence,” said Coach Kristen Snoddy. “This team has figured out to band together and fight.”

Snoddy and her team were jubilant after collecting their third win of the season and first win at Northwestern High School, the place they call home.

The Cougars won 25-17, 24-26, 25-18, 27-25 behind a strong team performance. The first match saw the Cougars put together several strong runs, including a 7-1 run late in the set. Strong play from Williams and Pelling was the key in the first set win.

Trine rebounded in the second set, winning 26-24. The Cougars pushed Trine to a 16-16 tie despite falling behind early. IU Kokomo ran off four straight points, thanks in part to Trine errors, to take a 21-19 lead. Trine held on, tied the match at 24, and scored the final two points to take the set and even the match at two games a piece.

IU Kokomo dominated the third game behind the efforts of Pelling and Spall. Throughout the third game and the decisive fourth game, Spall would be a force at the net.

“We did a good job of setting up our money plays,” said Snoddy. “We had players step up and make the play when we needed them to.”

Leading the match, 2-1, the Cougars were geared to finish off Trine in the fourth set. The visitors would not go without a fight. Trine sprinted to an 8-3 lead but the Cougars kept their composure.

“In the past, we would let a run by our opponent affect us,” Snoddy explained. “We’ve grown out of that. We keep our heads and set up our money plays.”



The Cougars clawed their way back and an ace by West capped a 7-2 run that ended with IU Kokomo holding a 14-13 lead, forcing a Trine timeout. Out of the timeout, Trine tied the game thanks to an IU Kokomo service error. Spall responded for the Cougars with a spike. Trine scored again, tying it at 15. The set would be tied six more times as the teams traded points. Trine finally put two points together to take a 23-21 lead. A couple of errors later, Trine led 24-22 and the Cougars were down to their last chance. Spall scored on a spike and Trine committed a four-hit error. Suddenly the game was tied at 24 as Spall added a second spike to make it 25-24 in favor of the Cougars. The visitors gave it one last gasp, scoring on a kill and tying the game at 25. Williams scored on a block to give the Cougars a one-point edge. Armstrong’s spike ended the set and match, giving IU Kokomo its first home win.



With all of the home games on the shelf, the Cougars will be road warriors the rest of the way. Something that is OK with Snoddy.

“Our girls play well on the road,” she said. “In the places we’ve been, we haven’t seen a crowd as large as we’ve had here at home.”

The Cougars will travel to Goshen College on Oct. 13 for a 7 p.m. game.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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