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News Release

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From High School Rivals to College Teammates

KOKOMO, Ind. — Three volleyball players put aside their high school rivalry to join forces as Cougars on the Indiana University Kokomo volleyball team.

“It wasn’t as weird as I thought it would be, we clicked instantly,” said Lindi Thomas, a freshman outside hitter from Parker City, Indiana.

Earlier this year, the IU Kokomo volleyball team played their first match of the season – and the first time Thomas, Kaley Harness and Alexis Brickner worked together as teammates toward a common goal.

Winning together, however, has not always been the case.

Good friends Harness and Brickner attended Southwood High School and participated in the volleyball program. Thomas attended Wapahani High School, making the transition from oppositions to teammates a little getting use to.

The rivalry between the players stemmed from the two volleyball teams facing one another on an annual basis.

“It was always a rivalry because when we went to the tournament, semi-state, we always played each other,” Harness said, an outside hitter and defensive specialist.

“It was basically every year,” added Thomas.

Harness, a sophomore, was the first to commit to the team, followed by Thomas. Brickner, a freshman middle hitter, was the last of the three to join the Cougars.

“I knew where Kaley came from, and that the Southwood program was intense, so I knew that it must be a good program. If it is good enough for Kaley, then it must be good,” said Thomas.

"I didn't decide until late, but Kaley was one of the main reasons I came here," added Brickner.

The three former rivals not only bonded on the court, but also took their friendships a step further and became roommates, for which Harness takes the credit.

"I guess this is my doing, since I'm a sophomore and they're freshmen," Harness said. "We all decided to live together, so I think it was easier for Lindi to come here and not have to worry about that."

The chemistry between the girls can be seen on the court with the team currently on a nine-game win streak, and having a record of 16-7 this season. It can be seen off the court whenever they are together.

With busy class schedules, frequent practices, and a hectic volleyball schedule, that includes travel to other states, as far away as Pennsylvania. The roommates don't have a lot of free time, but when they do, they normally spend it at home.

"We like to cook and watch movies," said Thomas.

"And eat!" Harness added.

Another thing they enjoy in their free time is watching T.V. shows; they list their current favorite as, The Vampire Diaries.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

Story written by student writer Calani Hitchell. Calani is an intern in the Office of Media & Marketing.

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