

- Dan Cappellazzo/Staff **STANDING TALL**: Grand Island's Kassie Bennett makes a block at the net Tuesday during the Vikings sectional final loss to Hamburg at Sweet Home High School. --



November 6, 2012

Bulldogs serve up GI loss in Class A Final

By AARON GARLAND Niagara Gazette

Niagara Gazette — The season came to an end Tuesday night at Sweet Home High School for the Grand Island girls volleyball team when the second-seeded Vikings lost a four-set match to No. 8 Hamburg, 23-25, 22-25, 25-19 and 19-25, in the Section VI Class A final.

Along with the end of the season, the match marked the end of the careers of 10 seniors on the Grand Island squad. The Class of 2013 saw three of its four seasons end at the hands of the Bulldogs, including twice in the championship match.

“I don’t know if I’ll ever have another class like that,” Grand Island coach John Head said.

Head also noted that it will be tough to replace the group that made up the core of the team

“The seniors, they play hard, they’re athletic, it’s a mature group, fun group of girls to be around,” Head said.

Head commended his team’s effort to battle until the end, despite having to come-from-behind all night.

“They played hard, you’re down 2-0 and they’re still battling, they’re still taking games,” Head said. “They won that third game, and that fourth game was anybody’s right up to the end. So they keep fighting and that’s all you can ask for.”

Al Brown, a senior who will attend the University of Maryland next year on a volleyball scholarship, finished with 19 kills. Alex London chipped in six kills.

Alex Griffin was steady on defense, recording nine digs while Cassie Oursler added four blocks.

The match came down to the Vikings' inability to handle the Bulldogs' serves. With a number of hard serves by Hamburg, it was tough for Grand Island to get into the offensive rhythm they are accustomed to.

"It was definitely the serve," Head said. "We had our setter having to bump-set a lot of balls and that's not getting us in our offense, we become predictable."

Hamburg will go on to play in the Far West Regional Saturday against the Section V Champion at Webster Schroeder in Rochester.

Despite the loss, it was a quite the ride this year for Head and his senior-centric squad.

"There's always that little coulda, would, shoulda in a loss like that," Head said. "But that was a great run we had in the regular season and a couple of real nice win in sectionals."