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By Mary Jo Monnis (9/24/12)

When she first started her career at Grand Island, Alex Brown said she was the worst player on the modified team. The 6-foot-1 senior outside hitter turned it around in a big way as she will sign a national letter of intent with the University of Maryland in November. "I didn't stop playing. I knew my mom played, and I knew I was expected to play, and I'm really glad I did," she said.

Brown went to Maryland's camp the summer before her junior year. She impressed the coaches and was offered a scholarship. With two full seasons to play in high school, she gave them a verbal commitment.

GI coach John Head said Brown is playing much more relaxed this year. "Her junior year she put a lot of pressure on herself to be the Division I player on the court," he said. "She thought she had to be the best player on every point. This year she's way more comfortable. She just plays hard and wants to make good play for herself and her teammates."

Six-foot-3 senior OH Cassie Oursler hits the ball hard, controls her body well at the net and puts up a big block, along with 6-0 senior Kassie Bennett. Eighth-grader Linsay Proctor earned the starting spot at libero.

Grand Island is off to a 5-0 start in the Niagara Frontier League winning all its matches in three games. The Vikings finished fifth out of 32 teams at the Penfield Tournament.

Elsewhere in the NFL: Lockport finished 12-2 in the league last season, sharing the title with Grand Island and North Tonawanda. The Lady Lions look to be in the hunt again with Megan Schneider, Brittany Sanford and Kailyn Szymanski.