

Island Sports

Volleyball starts strong with six tournament wins

By Adrienne Downing

As the reigning state champions, the North Kingstown High School girls' volleyball team expects everyone to try to dethrone them this year. They will be the team everyone practices harder to play against, but they are ready for the challenge.

The girls played their first games of the season on Aug. 30 in the Injury Fund tournament and head coach Brian Garrepy was pleased with what he saw.

"The pace of the games is slower in tournaments like this, but the team I put out there, they did everything I asked them to do," he said.

The tournament was a round-robin format, with four teams, each playing two games against each other. It allowed the Skippers to get a first-hand look at East Greenwich and Chariho, two of their division rivals. Both teams have new coaches this year, which Garrepy said will make both teams a bigger threat.

"The thing is that we have seen them and know what they have, but they have also now seen us and they will make adjustments accordingly," he said. "Both of those coaches are very good and they have some talented players."

Islander Sam Andreozzi, a senior starter on the team, was instrumental in the Skippers 6-0 streak in the tournament.

In the 25-17 game one victory against East Greenwich, she served nine times, including several aces, before the Skippers turned the ball over to the Avengers.

The coach praised Andreozzi's playing ability and leadership skills, and said she would be key to the Skippers success this year.

"She has the most varsity time of any of the players on the team and she does everything well. She can play any position I put her in," he said. "She really loves the game and I can't teach the ability she has. She is a great team leader."

He credits her with a unique



Colleen Bailey is ready for the serve from East Greenwich in the Injury Fund match on Aug. 30. Photo by Adrienne Downing

ability of self-assessment.

"Sam is one of my favorite players of all time. She is funny, and her teammates really benefit from her sense of humor. But, she is also self-critical and she is always looking to see what she can improve on," Garrepy said, adding, "It takes a unique person to

be able to make mistakes, laugh at them, learn their lesson and move on."

Andreozzi was also instrumental in the Skippers victories over Westerly and Chariho, as was islander Colleen Bailey.

Bailey moved up to the varsity team this year and served the

game-winning point in the 25-17 game three win against Westerly. She made several blocks in the game, including one key block, which brought the serve back to the Skippers for the remainder of the game.

"The addition of Bailey gives us another 6-footer on the line, which gives us a big presence up front," Garrepy said. "She is learning to play the right side and that will be a strength for us."

"She is such a coachable kid, as is most of this team. They really make my job easy and enjoyable because they are here to work hard and learn and that makes a big difference," he added.

Michelle Marguette, a sophomore and second year starter for the team, played tough all evening, but particularly in the 25-7 game five victory against Chariho. She had several kills and one dig that had the Chargers celebrating a kill before they realized the ball was back in their court.

"Michelle came to us with a little advantage because she had been playing since fifth grade. She

plays very instinctively," Garrepy said.

The Skippers tired a little in the sixth match of the day, but managed to hold off the Chargers and take the 25-21 win.

"We are working on getting our feet behind the ball and playing strong offensively and defensively. We served well to our spots tonight and I want us to be able to serve well to any spot on the floor we choose," the coach said.

The biggest question mark for the Skippers going into the season is how long starter Kelsey White will be out. She injured her leg just before the outdoor track state meet in the spring and has not been cleared to play by her doctors.

"Kelsey is probably one of, if not the best, one-on-one blockers in the state. It does hurt a little to have a missing starter, but everyone else is stepping up so well that I am not worried," Garrepy said.

The team will play Cumberland High School at home tonight, Sept. 6, at 6:30 p.m.

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