

Spring Valley wins Class AAA title

By Tim Stephens
The Herald-Dispatch

Revenge can be a tremendous motivator.

Spring Valley defeated Cabell Midland 25-10, 25-17, 25-22 Saturday at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center to claim its third Class AAA volleyball state championship. The victory avenged a five-set loss to the Knights last week in the Region 4 title game.

Timberwolves senior setter Brooke Smith said the regional loss was a prime motivator for her team.

"We lost in the region and we lost last year in the state championship," Smith said. "Losing doesn't feel good and that motivated us today."

Spring Valley showed its desire to avenge its lone loss of the season early, scoring the first 12 points of the opening set on its way to a 25-10 triumph. Cabell Midland rallied hard as its boisterous fans roared their approval, but never took so much as a lead until the third set.

"We started a little too slowly," Knights coach Julie Brumfield said. "You can't do that against a good team such as Spring Valley, but I'm proud of our girls for a great season."

The Timberwolves used superior height on the front line to score and block in dominating fashion. Spring Valley also combined powerful smashes with delicate drops to keep Cabell Midland off balance.

Junior setter Kathryn Caudill, who scored eight points, said revenge was in the minds of



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Spring Valley volleyball players celebrate a score against Cabell Midland during Saturday's Class AAA state championship in Charleston.

her and her teammates, but they had to temper that emotion to play fundamentally well.

"Cabell Midland is good," Caudill said. "We knew they could beat us because they had beaten us before, but we knew that we had beaten them more often, so that gave us confidence."

Spring Valley's dominance continued in the second set, although the Knights made the

Timberwolves earn the victory. Spring Valley never trailed and led by no more than four until Caudill's spike boosted the lead to 18-13. Cabell Midland never drew closer than within four the rest of the set, which ended with a smash by outside hitter Alex Darby.

The third set was a classic battle. Cabell Midland took its first lead at 3-2 and led 13-8

after Gracie Hightower's block for a point. Spring Valley, though, scored the next six points to lead 14-13. The teams were tied 15-15 when freshman Kennedy Stanley, who scored 10 points, smashed a shot down the sideline for the go-ahead point. The Timberwolves never trailed again.

Darby's hard shot, her 17th point of the match, ended the game and set off a celebration with 'Wolves piled on one another on the court and supporters cheering from the stands.

Gracie Brumfield led Cabell Midland with eight points.

Timberwolves coach Cadara Shreve said the quick start was important for her team, especially coming off a regional loss.

"We wanted to jump out to a really good lead and then relax and play our game," Shreve said. "We had to play aggressive, play to win and not play not to lose. We told them to swing, swing, swing."

In the Class AA championship game, Bridgeport rallied to defeat Philip Barbour 25-17, 21-25, 21-25, 27-25, 15-11.

The Colts led by five in the fourth set and appeared headed for a 3-1 victory, but the Indians rallied to win.

In Class A, Magnolia defeated Tyler Consolidated 25-23, 25-22, 25-8.

The Blue Eagles jumped to a 13-4 lead in the first set, held off a run by the Silver Knights and led 19-11, then withstood another rally to win the first set. The second set was similar, but Magnolia dominated the third set to capture the title.