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MECHANICSBURG — It was a family affair when Northern Cambria defeated Berlin Brothersvalley in the PIAA Class 1A championship match, Nov. 17 at Cumberland Valley High School.

It was the fifth PIAA title appearance and third championship for coach Mike Hogan. The Colts also won titles in 2005 and 2009 and placed second in 2004 and 2006.

"It feels really good. It was a little harder on me. I'm 10 years older, so it's a little harder to hold it together and get things done. It never gets old though," said Hogan, a 28-year veteran. "I'm happy to be back down here again. That atmosphere walking into the gym is awesome and that's why you do it. To see kids buying in and working hard. It's nice to see hard work paying off."

And it's no surprise that Hogan's daughter Maggie was the star of the match. Hogan, who was recognized on the PVCA All-State Team last year as a freshman, recorded 26 kills in the Colts 3-1 win over Berlin.

"I wanted it so bad. It's always been a goal of mine, a dream of mine, to win this," said Maggie Hogan, a sophomore outside hitter. "I've been dreaming of this since I saw my sister win her title. I can't let her beat me. Now I've matched her."

Hogan was referring to her sister Ashley, who was a member of the 2005 championship team.

"This team is like a family," Maggie Hogan said. "We are friends on and off of the court."

Hogan recorded eight kills in the first set, while Berlin committed six serving errors, and Northern Cambria dominated in a 25-13 victory. The Colts scored 18 of the last 22 points.

Berlin evened the match at 1-1 with a 25-22 victory in the second set. Kiera Booth, a PVCA All-Star hitter, led the Mountaineers with five of her 14 kills.

"We made a couple mistakes in set two that allowed them to wake their crowd up," Mike Hogan said. "It was loud and our kids were looking around, a little rattled. I told them to trust your teammates, trust yourself and let's go. They got rolling again and closed out the next two sets."

Hogan added seven kills in the third set, a 25-20 victory, and six kills in the fourth and deciding set, a 25-22 win.

"Maggie is an amazing volleyball player," said senior middle hitter Nicole Bearer of her teammate. "She loves the game and it shows in the way she plays. She is our go to when we need a point."

Coach Hogan was impressed with his daughter's performance, but felt her teammates deserve a lot of credit too.

"[Maggie] had a great game and you can look at what she did, but someone has to get her the ball. Our libero (Rayna Buza) did awesome today," Mike Hogan said. "Camryn Dumm, our setter, ran a great offense and made them respect our hitters, which opened Maggie up to hit the ball, so there's a lot of pieces to that puzzle. Yes, our offense runs through Maggie and she's a great hitter, but kids have to contribute to make that happen."

Berlin coach Corey Will was also impressed.

"We knew coming in we were never going to stop her (Hogan). Our job was to try and contain her and we didn't do it. She was every bit as good as we knew she was. Today she played incredible ball and her teammates played well around her."

Will felt his squad played well in three of the four sets.

"Once we got through the jitters and our erratic serving in the first set, we settled in and played decent ball after that. I'm honored and blessed to be here. It was a great season for us,

our first state championship appearance. It brought so much pride to the community. Hopefully, we can come back and take the next step and change the color from silver to gold."

Hogan had similar thoughts on Berlin's performance.

"For single-A, it was a nice, high-energy game. It was a pretty good one. You have to give credit to Berlin, they didn't roll over. They kept on battling and pushed us to the end. There was no quit from those kids."

With only two seniors, Northern Cambria was not considered a favorite in the Class 1A bracket.

"We weren't supposed to be here until next year, but I didn't tell the girls that," coach Hogan said. "We don't talk about rebuilding because when you say the word rebuild it allows the kids to think it's okay to lose. It's not. Our kids are driven and resilient and they came through when we needed it. They grew up a lot this year and it shows."

With all but two players back, Hogan is already looking toward his 29th season.

"We're going to be okay next year," coach Hogan said. "We have a nice group coming back. We're going to enjoy this for a little while and then get back at it."

Northern Cambria advanced to the title match with wins over Bishop Canevin (25-23, 25-23, 23-25, 25-22), Clarion (25-20, 22-25, 26-24, 25-17), and Bishop Carroll (25-20, 25-23, 25-14). Berlin Brothersvalley earned its berth with wins over Ft. Cherry (25-18, 25-14, 25-19), Covenant Christian (25-13, 25-6, 25-15), and Nativity B.V.M. (24-26, 25-22, 25-21, 25-22).