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The third time was a charm for the West York girls volleyball team.

In 2016, West York lost to Allentown Central Catholic in the PIAA Class 3A semifinals. Allentown Central went on to win the title.

In 2017, West York had a rematch with Allentown Central, again in the PIAA semifinals. The match went to a fifth set and West York came up short in a 15-13 decision.

With that in mind, it was no surprise that the two teams met again in this year's PIAA semifinals. And once again, it took five sets to determine a winner.

This time, West York would not be denied. After falling two points short of a title berth last year, the Bulldogs won by the same margin this time (16-14).

With the semifinals behind them, West York made its first appearance in a PIAA title match on Nov. 17 at Cumberland Valley High School. And the Bulldogs made the most of their opportunity.

"It was a great win. It's been a fun year all along," said West York coach Joe Ramp, after his squad swept Warren in the title match. "We knew that we had a very special group. They have been together since seventh grade. This is a truly talented group. And they do play for one another. There's not a He-Man or a Superwoman on this team. Everybody has to perform for us to win."

And that's just what the Bulldogs did in the championship match against Warren, another school making its first appearance in a PIAA title match.

"It feels unreal," West York middle hitter Tesia Thomas said. "It feels like it's a dream. It's amazing."

Thomas felt true teamwork was the key to their wins in the semifinals and title match.

"This year, we were even more of a family," Thomas said. "In the past two years there were games, here and there, in which we had a little too much individualism. This year, we were a family from the first match until the final match.

The first set featured runs by both teams.

Warren, the District 6 champions, jumped out to a 9-4 lead capped with a 6-0 run. Ramp promptly called for a timeout.

"I told them to just calm down," Ramp said. "Don't worry about the crowd noise. It's still a volleyball court. You just go out there and play and they did."

West York, the District 3 champion, responded with a five-point run to tie the match at 9-9. Both teams had small runs until Warren held a 16-14 lead. West York scored the next five points and went on to record a 25-22 victory.

Warren held a 6-4 lead early in the second set when West York went on an 8-0 run. The Bulldogs dominated the rest of the set and recorded a 25-15 victory.

In the third set, Warren held leads of 6-5 and 11-10, but those would be the Dragons only leads. Outside hitter Julia Rill and Thomas combined for nine kills, as West York recorded a 25-20 victory to clinch the school's first PIAA title.

"This whole day was really intense," West York middle hitter Alayna Harris said. "Going into it, we really didn't think we would win in three sets, but it was just a matter of us pushing ourselves and playing better."

West York finished the season with a 27-1 record and handed Warren (21-1) its first loss.

"It feels great to be wearing this gold medal," West York setter Taylor Morley said. "We came in here with the goal of having a good time. We would have been happy to go home with the runner-up trophy, but instead we get to bring home a championship trophy."

Warren coach Mike Dolan was impressed with West York's defense.

"They were making digs on pretty much everything we did," Dolan said. "I think you have to really maximize the opportunities that you get and I don't think we were able to do that tonight."

Dolan felt West York's serving and Warren's serve-receive played a big part in deciding the winner.

"We were out of system with our serve-receive a lot," Dolan said. "We really were able to side-out all year long, but we struggled tonight."

Despite the loss, Dolan was very impressed with his squad and the support it received.

"This is huge for our community, and the support we received all year, and this match was like nothing we've ever seen," Dolan said. "This has been a magical season. We played really well most of the year and didn't have a letdown. We just ran into a buzzsaw in the title match."

West York was led by: Julia Rill (12 kills), Gianna Krinock (7 kills), Taylor Morley (30 assists), Tesia Thomas (11 kills), and Kambrie Hepler (11 digs).

Warren was led by: Lydia Latimer (10 kills, 7 digs), Jordan Sitler (6 kills), Ellie Lobdell (5 kills, 8 digs), Celia Chase (8 kills, 7 digs), Alexis Nyquist (24 assists, 12 digs), Julia Lobdell (5 digs), and Grace Wortman (10 digs).

West York advanced to the title match with wins over Greater Nanticoke (25-12, 25-16, 25-16), Pope John Paul II (26-24, 25-22, 26-24), and Allentown C.C. (19-25, 25-19, 25-16, 18-25, 16-14). Warren earned its berth with wins over Central Valley 0 (25-20, 25-15, 25-15), Thomas Jefferson (25-19, 25-23, 25-21), Knoch (25-20, 25-22, 19-25, 25-22).