

By Ken Wunderley

The Camp Hill Trinity girls volleyball team appeared in the PIAA Class 2A girls volleyball title match for the fourth time in five years and claimed its second title with a 3-0 win against Corry.

Trinity was the only team in the four championship matches, held at Cumberland Valley High School, that recorded a sweep. The Shamrocks finished the season with a perfect 24-0 record.

Trinity claimed its first PIAA title in 2020, but had to settle for the runner-up trophy in 2021 and 2023. Corry was making its second appearance in the finals but fell short of their championship performance in 2016.

Both Trinity titles ended with a perfect record. In 2020, Trinity posted a 17-0 record. This season, the Shamrocks finished with a 23-0 record and recorded four 3-0 sweeps in the PIAA tournament.

"We played both matches at Cumberland Valley, but it was much different atmosphere at this year's finals," said Trinity coach John Barrick, reflecting on the two titles. "We were dealing with COVID at that time. Each team was allowed to have only 100 fans and everybody had to wear a mask. This year, we played in front of a sellout crowd of more than 2,500 and nobody was wearing a mask."

This year's title match was much closer than the score indicated.

Corry took an early 5-2 lead in the first set, but Trinity scored seven of the next eight points and never looked back. The Shamrocks posted a 25-20 victory with senior outside hitter Jayda Gray leading the way with five kills.

"The two teams matched up well," Barrick said. "It took a little time to set up our attack in the first set. We finally got separation with our attack later in the set. The second set was much closer, but we were able to pull out a two-point win."

The second set was tied seven times. Corry took its first lead at 22-21 with a kill by senior outside hitter Halley Albers. It would be the only time Corry led in the set, as Trinity scored four of the last five points to pull out a 25-23 victory. A serving error gave the Shamrocks the deciding point.

"The difference in any really good volleyball match comes down to one or two points," said Corry coach Kelly Goodsel. "We got to 21-21, 22-22 and those last few points we couldn't put them away."

Despite the 2-0 deficit, Corry did not quit. The Beavers jumped out to leads of 7-2 and 11-6 in the third set with three kills by sophomore outside hitter Grace Allen and two by Albers.

At that point, Gray and senior outside hitter Sadie Palermo took over. Both recorded four kills to lead Trinity to a 25-22 victory. Gray capped the victory with her 12th kill of the match.

"I think their height affected us," Goodsel said. "They have four kids over six foot tall and we don't have a kid over 5-10. We really couldn't run our middles as much as we would have liked which put pressure on our outsides."

Trinity qualified for the PIAA tournament by winning the District 3 title. The Shamrocks advanced to the title match with wins against Villa Joseph Marie, 3-0 in the first round; Forest Hills, 3-0 in the quarterfinals; and Lansdale Catholic, 3-0 in the semifinals.

Gray led the Shamrocks with 11 kills and 15 digs, while Palermo had 10 kills. Sophomore Emily Wolfe (13 assists) and freshman Quinlan Bilodeau (11 assists) shared the setting duties.

Barrick used 9 players in the title match and only three are seniors.

"We had 11 seniors last year including four all-state players," Barrick said. "We were much younger this year. I think we have a good shot at getting back here next year."

Corry (19-2) qualified by winning the District 10 title. The Beaver earned their title berth with wins against Neshannock, 3-0 in the first round; Johnstown Richland, 3-2 in the quarterfinals; and Erie Cathedral Prep, 3-2 in the semifinals.

Albers and Allen each had 14 kills for Corry. Senior Payton McCray (18 assists) and sophomore Haley Mamau (16 assists) shared the setting duties. Senior libero Makenna Moore recorded 22 digs, while senior backrow specialist Sydney Woods had 12.

"This is probably the most athletic group we've ever had," Goodsel said. "We've had bigger kids and better individual kids, but collectively as a group, we have nine kids that fit perfectly as a puzzle."

Goodsel used 12 players in the title match and eight are seniors.

"We have to do some rebuilding every year," Goodsel said. "We've been fortunate to play in the District 10 final 10 of the last 12 years and won five district titles. We will not be as deep next year, but we will be taller. I expect to be back in the state top ten."