



Photo by Sofia Metcalf



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LEADERS

Coaches: Kim Benka, Shaneé Herd, Abbey Smith, Megan Thurow, Heather Thurow

Captains: Dori Hobbie, Annika Benson, Lydia Schroeder

All Conference: Annika Benson, Dori Hobbie, Maddy Benka, Violet Sahlstrom

Season of Pride

How girls' volleyball channeled enthusiasm to achieve a great season

Finishing 14-13, the best in over five years, the Redhawks volleyball team had an impressive season. Coming back steady from little team bonding activities in the last season, along with taking second place in the conference with great performances, such as the matches against Holy Angels, St. Croix Lutheran and Nova Classical, the team finished strong, and it boiled down to the team's hard work and commitment.

"We all individually played really well and had some really good team chemistry this year, which brought us pretty far," sophomore Maddy Benka explained. "And so when we would bring the chemistry onto the court, we would just have fun and play."

Kim Benka, the head coach of the volleyball team, agreed.

"Our team worked hard to find a balance [and] come together as one on the court, which led to us playing stronger and fighting," she said. "We competed well against some of the top teams in the area."

Success could be connected to the fun they had off the court.

"They bounced back from no team bonding activities in the 2020 season to many off-court activities, such as team dinners and attending other MA games together," she said.

"Our team worked hard to find a balance [and] come together as one on the court, which led us to playing stronger and fighting."

— Coach Kim Benka

Team bonding helped players avoid conflicts and resolve drama during the season.

"When someone would miss their hit or pass, instead of blaming it all solely on that girl, we would all congratulate each other on what we did well in the play and how we could improve for the next time," said sophomore Rosalie Dobrovolny. After

losses, instead of everyone getting discouraged, the team worked hard on skills and techniques to make sure they played well in the next game.

"We always took our weaknesses from previous nights and worked with what we had," said junior Danae Goree. "A lot of times on the court the only thing we needed was more energy — just to be louder and do what we knew how to do."

One of many traditions that brought the team together came before home games, when players would cheer in the gym hallway with everyone going side-to-side and one person standing in the middle, junior Violet Sahlstrom, leading with energy and team spirit. They would hype each other up and yell, "Who's gonna bring the blood and pain?" Players would reply "Red and black!" Gradually they would get louder until they were yelling as loud as they could, ending with the cheer, "AHHHHH-OOH!" Then they took the floor for game time, together.

— Joy Chen