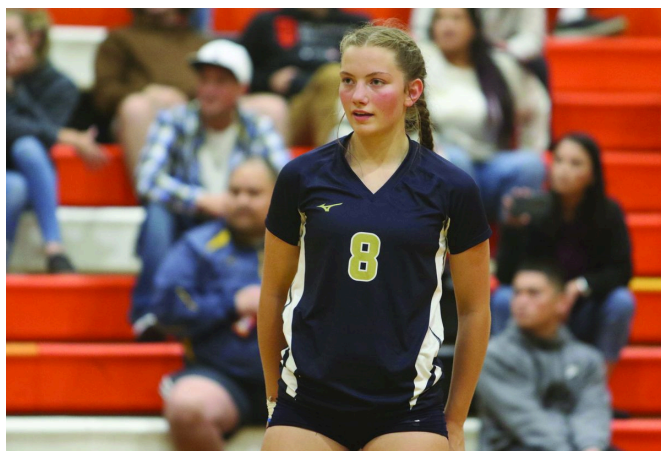


Photos: Curtis named MVP; nine Warriors receive all-league volleyball recognition

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After going undefeated on their way to a league championship in volleyball this fall, four Del Norte Warriors have been named to the Big 5 All-League team, including league MVP McKenna Curtis.

The Del Norte girls recently closed out an impressive season with a record of 27-9, including a North Coast Section opening-round playoff victory over Healdsburg.

They were a perfect 8-0 in the Big 5, with Curtis playing a key role for the team and earning the respect of the opposing coaches in the process.

The multi-sport junior standout, who is also among the best softball players in the H-DNL, has worked hard to succeed.

“McKenna is a player that puts in the work while she’s playing a sport and during the offseason,” Del Norte head coach Meagan Curtis said. “She was a primary passer on the team this year, a consistent server, and was the league kill leader.”

And that wasn’t the only way she contributed to the team’s success.

“She was one of our leaders on the court and an unstoppable force in the league this year,” the head coach added.

In addition to McKenna, teammates Lili Nunez, Reece White and Bliss Blackburn each also were named among the 10 players on the all-league team, while five other Warriors received an honorable mention.

Nunez developed into a team leader this year after also putting in a lot of offseason work.

“Lili decided she wanted to be stronger and better at her craft than last season,” Meagan Curtis said of the junior setter. “Putting in the time in the weight room and the reps at practice, she accomplished her goals.

“She was a leader for us this year, both vocally and in how she played.”

White, meanwhile, impressed the league coaches with her passing and also developed into more of a leader in her junior season with the team, while playing some outstanding defense.

“Reece became one of our most consistent passers this season,” her head coach said. “She was also a leader on the court and epitomized the definition of tenacity on defense.

“She learned to play bigger than she was as one of our middle blockers.”

Blackburn, meanwhile, is just a freshman, but she had an immediate impact with the team.

The standout outside hitter adapted quickly to a new role and gladly took on any challenge.

“She was not afraid to tackle any job that we gave her,” Meagan Curtis said. “Becoming an outside hitter as a freshman is a big challenge. Bliss met the challenge and played three rotations in the back row as well.”

Lauren Stutes, Khloe Smith, Breann Winningham, Lily Wilson and Sheena Xiong each also were given an all-league honorable mention for the Warriors.

The dominating Del Norte girls dropped just four sets in eight league matches and won five of them in straight sets.

They defeated Healdsburg 3-1 in the opening round of the NCS Division-4 playoffs, before losing at No. 3 seed Saint Mary's by a score of 3-1 in the quarterfinals to end their season.