

SPORTS BRIEFS

STAFF REPORTS

Volleyball season ends with loss to Manteo

The John A. Holmes volleyball team's (6-15) season ended on Oct. 21 after losing to Manteo, 25-22, 25-14, 29-27, in the quarterfinal round of the Albemarle Athletic Conference tournament to

the Redskins (5-11) Oct. 21 at Manteo High School.

This week's games

Wednesday, Oct. 30

HIGH SCHOOL

Boys Soccer

John A. Holmes at Perquimans, 6 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 1

HIGH SCHOOL

Football

Manteo at John A. Holmes, 7:30 p.m.

SPEAR

Continued from B1

good job with us this year," she said. "She pushed me and our team to get better everyday at practice. She always would say 'Don't play not to lose — play to win!' And we did. We won the conference season and tournament."

It's been a whirlwind of a season — Albemarle Athletic Conference and tournament champs — then came regionals and the state meet.

"I am very proud of my teammates — the whole team did so well this year," Spear said. "I was excited to get to play at regionals in Greenville and felt like I played some of my best tennis all year. Then came the state tournament in Cary which was an amazing experience."

Most assuredly, Aces like Spear will have a sequel next season.

"I hope to keep getting better and have a chance to compete at states again next year," she said. "I am thankful for everyone in our community who wished me luck and supported me. Go Aces!"

Take a step back to Tuesday (Oct. 23) when the Aces were playing in the eastern Regionals.

"Unfortunately we fell short in Washington against Research Triangle," May said after the meet. "We lost 5-4 in a heartbreaking match as

both teams hustled to get the matches in before the rain moved in."

Aces were one game from the win and moving to Round 3 of Duals Team but fell short in fighting off their opponents in the doubles match.

"Our tennis season is over but we can still hold our heads up high as we prevailed through a season marked with obstacles that we had no control over," May said. "The girls were pretty resilient. And, we still have Sydney Spear going to the state tournament this weekend in singles play. What a great way to end a season, at the state tournament."

Aces led the match 4-2 after singles play with wins at No. 2, No. 3, No. 5 and No. 6 singles.

Spear defeated Melissa Tobias 6-1, 6-2, Carson Ray defeated Grace Ulanich 6-4, 6-3, Olivia Hare had a nail-biter win over Morgan Shadoan 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 10-3 as did Trinity Copeland with a win over Julia Shough 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

Other singles scores were Sabrina Grewel over Lilly Bunch 6-0, 6-0 and Katie Leonard over Bailey Rinehart 6-2, 2-6, 3-6.

Doubles scores were Grewel/Tobias over Bunch/Spear 8-4, Ulanich/Leonard over Ray/Rinehart 9-7 and Shadoan/Shough over Hare/Copeland 8-5.

WARRIORS

Continued from B1

player and the transition has been phenomenal. She would come to the boys practices in the spring and loved a challenge. One of her goals was to win a state championship and she came very close."

Lawrence had played the Spartans before earlier in the season in the Alice Cobb Tournament. The team starts five seniors which have a lot of match experience, the coaches noted, so the Warriors had to be at their best from the outset.

Cobb said, "Kerr-Vance has had a good tennis program for many years and this year they had a veteran team with five seniors. We knew going in it would take our best tennis to knock them off and pull out a win."

Corbett added, "We were hoping to win at least two and possibly three of the doubles matches. That would have given us the edge going into the singles matches."

As it stood, Lawrence was able to win one doubles match. The No. 3 team of Perris Clayton and Annie Hayes Trowell outlasted K-V's duo of Leah Moseley and Austin Abbott 9-7.

"Perris and Annie Hayes have been a strong doubles team all season," Corbett said. "They work well together with their communication and court coverage. The match was close from the beginning. Their first serves are strong and set up volleys that were easily put away. Their win boosted our confidence and calmed everyone's nerves."

Kerr-Vance gained control of the doubles with wins at No. 1 (Caroline Williams and Edie Echols 8-4 over Gardner and Emma Cobb) and No. 2 (Lauren Moseley and Lorena Negron 8-3 over Isabella Spruill and

Kuschel).

"We were hoping for two out of three in doubles play, which would have given us a legitimate shot of reaching five points and securing a victory," Cobb said.

Corbett added, "It's a big confidence booster to be up after doubles are played. We weren't as consistent as we needed to be and committed more errors than we usually do."

Corbett said the Warriors justifiably were nervous, as it was their first time in the state finals.

"Sometimes it's hard to relax and just play your best tennis when you are on center stage. Kerr-Vance made errors also, but we didn't capitalize on them," she said.

The Spartans sealed the match with wins at No. 1 singles (Williams 6-1, 6-0 over Emma Cobb), No. 2 singles and No. 3 singles (Negron over Spruill 6-1, 6-4).

"We remained confident and played with great effort; we just fell short," Cobb said.

To get to the finals, Lawrence had to overcome fellow Tarheel Independent Conference rival Ridgecroft School in the semifinals on Wednesday (Oct. 23). The teams split during the season with both results ending 5-4, but LA won this time 7-2.

Again, doubles was crucial, and the Warriors were able to take all three matches with the Rams.

The No. 1 team of Cobb and Gardner rallied for their first win over Mattie Grace Gilliam and Clare Place, 9-7.

The No. 2 duo of Spruill and Kuschel got behind early in their match but were able to rally and defeat Belle Turner and Gracie Boswell, and Lawrence completed the sweep with a No. 3 doubles triumph from Clayton and Trowell, 8-1 over Camille Pierce and Elizabeth Brown.

"Winning all three

doubles was the key in this match," Corbett said. "Emma and Hailey Hope had not been Mattie Grace and Claire in previous matches with Ridgecroft."

"They had a slow start but were determined to stay in the match," Corbett added. "They began to play more aggressively and you could feel the momentum building for them. I believe it was one of the best matches they played together this year."

As for Spruill and Kuschel, being behind early didn't faze them.

"They tied the score to force a tiebreaker, stayed calm and narrowly won it," Corbett said. "They have played well together this season. They bonded as a team. Lisa (a German exchange student) has been a wonderful asset to our team."

The Warriors lost the top two singles matches (Gilliam edged Cobb 6-2, 7-6 (7-5), while Belle Turner stopped Gardner 6-2, 6-2), but Lawrence's strength all season has been seeds three through six, and they came through again.

No. 3 Spruill defeated Place 6-3, 6-4; No. 4 Clayton won 6-4, 4-6, 12-10 over Boswell; No. 5 Trowell won 6-1, 6-0 over Pierce and No. 6 Kuschel emerged victorious over Reagan Edwards 6-1, 6-1 to seal the semifinals win.

"Our No. 1 and No. 2 doubles teams made outstanding comebacks with a lot of determination and great play," Cobb said.

Coming up short against Northeast Academy in last year's state semifinals was a motivating factor this season, the coaches acknowledged.

"Losing to Northeast last year was devastating," Corbett said. "We knew we had to play hard throughout the season to get a high seed in the state playoffs, and we were thrilled with the No. 2 seed."

Reflecting on the season, Corbett and Cobb said the loss to Kerr-Vance was disappointing but that the thrill of making it to the finals this year knowing no other LA team had previously done so was exciting.

Cobb noted, "The reason we made the state finals is we are a solid team from top to bottom and we had great leaders at the top in Emma and Hailey Hope. All of our seeds plus our exhibition players (Bryson Perry and Lucy Spruill) played great all year. They made this a tennis season to remember forever."

"The most important thing was letting the girls know how much we love them and how proud we are of them," Corbett added. "They played their best and that's all we asked them to do. They never gave up. They are a very special group of girls and are a joy to coach."

The coaches also lauded the support of the parents, grandparents and faithful fans who "were so dedicated and followed us everywhere," Corbett said.

And sometime in the near future, a new green and gold banner will be raised in the LA gym.

"We are excited to get a tennis banner to hang in our gymnasium," Corbett said. "It's our first banner. What an accomplishment for our girls."

"Thomas and I knew if the girls worked hard that it could be a great season, and they didn't disappoint us."

Cobb closed, "We are all excited about a new banner that will be hanging in our gym, mainly because we worked extremely hard for this. The loss to Northeast last year motivated us to get better this year and we did. Our message after the loss to Kerr-Vance was to keep your heads up, be proud of your accomplishments and next year, let's come back and win it all."

SOCCER

Continued from B1

Manteo match

DiMartino gave solid praise to the boys from the Lost Colony.

"I'm impressed by how much Manteo has improved in the course of the season," he said. They've become a team of real quality and a worthy representative of our region. They waxed Camden 7-0 last week. And Monday's match convinces me that that result isn't a fluke. Ralph Cleaver, Manteo's coach, told me in early September that they were young and were making mistakes of inexperience; but that they'd pull it all together in the end. And indeed they have. They humbled us 5-0 tonight and the score accurately represents the reality of the match."

DiMartino said to produce soccer players of Manteo's caliber — a team of this caliber — you have to have what Manteo and First

Flight have: Year-round soccer players bred in a soccer culture, playing club soccer against quality competition throughout the year. The quickness of decision making, the easy facility in the subtleties of the game, the recognition of patterns, is not available to guys who come to soccer as a second sport or late in adolescence, or whose experience of the game is rec level play or small ball with the guys.

"In Edenton, we've accomplished what is possible with the athletes we have. And, believe me, we have some very gifted athletes," DiMartino said. "We've built a very good 1A public school team. But if we're ever to threaten Manteo and First Flight, we will, in my opinion, need to resurrect our local Chowan Youth Soccer Club."

DiMartino said some take offense at Manteo's superlative play and their raucous, partisan crowd.

"Indeed, Manteo is a tough venue, in which, over the years, more than one of our players have become

incensed and acted out," he said. "But, for me, this is a joy of soccer — to play quality competition in a loud, electric atmosphere."

Senior Night

When Edenton hosted Gates County (Oct. 23) — Senior Night — the Aces didn't need Snoopy to shoot down the Red Barons — 3-0.

"This was an emotional evening for our seniors," DiMartino said. "It was an emotional evening for me, as well. These are boys who came in with me — were freshmen in my first year as head coach. They bought into the vision right away and together we've built a strong and successful program. It will be a bittersweet moment for me to watch them walk off into the evening when the season's final whistle blows."

Fieldside, the Aces managed Wednesday's match comfortably, despite some undisciplined play in the excitement of the festivities, DiMartino said.

"We started all our seniors in both halves; and everybody on our 25-man roster

played," he said. "We secured three goals in the first half and few of our starters played more than a few minutes in the second stanza. Our reserves handled matters capably and we went home winners, with the final tally Los Lobos de Edenton 3-0 Gates County."

Pasquotank win

That's not the only win that the Aces posted last week. Edenton defeated Pasquotank up in Elizabeth City — 5-1. The match's point spread shows how much the blue and gold have improved this season.

"We'd last met Pasquotank in August, in our opening match of the season, when we had to score late to scratch out a 2-2 draw," DiMartino said. "Things were different this time as we scored twice in the first ten minutes. The first goal came from an efficient ball by Jonathan Salinas through Pasquotank's back line to on-running Marsel Zidan, who with patience slotted it home from short range. The second tally was from a Giovanni

Plata corner kick, finished by Marsel."

Pasquotank responded to these injuries forcefully and at about the 30th minute pulled one back when speedy Jalen Haist gained space to send a fantastic left-footed cross from deep in the corner, emphatically finished first touch by Chandler Walton. The remainder of the half was played evenly, with aggressive defense and energetic offensive sequences from both teams, but no change in the score line.

The second half played out differently. From the first whistle of the stanza, the Royal and Gold took command. At about the 46th minute Zidan out-manuevered his mark deep in the right corner and lofted a lovely cross that was first-touched home from seven yards by freshman Logan Wagner.

Zidan found the mark

again at about 54 minutes with a venomous dipping free kick from 28 yards.

Then, at about 59 minutes, Zidan beat two defenders down the right flank and was taken down in the box to earn a penalty kick, which he converted to set the score at Los Lobos de Edenton 5-1 Pasquotank.

For the remainder of the match the Aces dominated possession. The home team, fighting almost entirely off the ropes, could do little more than cover up before the onslaught of Aces pressure. Freshman Daniel Emmanizer subbed in for Zidan at forward and created dangerous chances. Johathan "The Cobra" Bermudez managed the midfield with incisive passes and definitive defense.

"Our backfield swung the ball purposefully and shifted the point of attack. Los Lobos de Edenton won going away," DiMartino said.

X-COUNTRY

Continued from B1

in 5th place (20:01) followed by Logan Garman in eighth place (21:09) then A.J. Schwarm in 12th place (21:39) then Jacob Brooks at 14th place (21:49) and Lukas Berry at 20th (22:41) along with Ethan Dale at 26th place (26:18).

Camden won the boys meet, followed by Manteo, then Edenton and Perquimans in fourth place. Gates County sent a few runners, but not enough to field a team.

Per the girls' side of the ledger, Itary Lopez-Bonilla led the Aces with a fifth place finish (23:09); followed by Amanda Turner at 13th place (26:53) then Camie Jenkins at 22nd



PHOTO COURTESY LAURIE BROOKS

Aces' cross country team poses with Superintendent Rob Jackson (left) before competing in the Albemarle Athletic Conference Championship recently at Merchants Mill Pond in Gates County.

(31:11) and Michelle Carpiette at 24th (33:52) along with Jamie Hamm at 25th (34:07).

Camden won the boys meet, followed by Manteo, then Edenton with Perquimans in fourth place and Gates in fifth

place. Based on the latest conference standings, Aces' team is tied with Perquimans' Pirates for third, while the girls' team has leaped ahead of the Pirates to a strong third-place showing.

Meadows and Garman are second team All-Conference. Perquimans' Jayden White is AAC Runner of the Year. Gates' Jacob Euler is at first team All-Conference.

Lopez-Bonilla is second team All-Conference.

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