

By ROY ALLEN -- Seward sports information director

It seems as soon as it started, it was over.

In 2008 the Seward County Lady Saints Volleyball team embarked on a mission together and although they didn't reach their ultimate goal of a National Tournament appearance, they had the most number of wins from any Lady Saints volleyball team in six seasons.

In arguably the best match the Lady Saints played all year, Seward County dropped a five set emotional match to Hutchinson in the Region

6 Tournament semi-final Saturday night after beating Pratt in the quarterfinals earlier in the day.

If there was ever a time that exemplified "leaving it all on the court" that's exactly what the Lady Saints did against the Blue Dragons in the hard fought battle.

The next morning, a fatigued Lady Saints team was beaten in straight sets by the Pratt team they had already defeated four times on the season.



The 2008 season for the Lady Saints was one of the best in recent memory.

A 10-2 conference record was good for 2nd in the Jayhawk West and their 35 regular season wins was sixth most of any NJCAA division one school in the country. Seward County beat two top-20 opponents in

2008 and 14 of their 16 losses on the year came to ranked opposition. Many milestones were reached during the 2008 campaign including head coach Bert Luallen getting his 100th win at Seward County against McCook in the Wyo-Braska Shootout as well as his 300th overall win as a collegiate head coach against Pratt on 'Dig Pink'

night.

Sophomore Jelena Simic far surpassed the school's all-time kill record with 1,374 shattering the previous high of 1,083. Simic also finishes her career third all-time in digs, fourth all-time in aces, and second in kills/game. She stamped her name in the record books by finishing second in kills with 695, fifth in digs with 474 and fourth in kills/game with 4.31, all single-season records.

Chelsea Myers also had a spectacular sophomore season registering the seventh most assists in a single season with 1,172 and the 10th most digs with 424. Myers will also go down in Lady Saints history with the fourth most assists all-time and the fifth most digs all-time.

Taryn Westerman's 493 assists rank her 10th all-time in just her first season with the Lady Saints.

LaKendra Sanders 178 blocks rank her eighth in single-season blocks.

The 2008 Lady Saints also find themselves in the record books as a team as their 1,753 assists is fifth most in a single season and their 2,627 digs placed them second in school history.

Lady Saints finish volleyball season

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Five Lady Saints were named Jayhawk West All-Conference and NJCAA All- Region 6 for their performances on the court.

Jelena Simic was the class of the Jayhawk West this season and was named Conference Most Valuable Player for her dominating play. She also finished the regular season leading the nation in total kills with 660.

LaKendra Sanders, Lindsey Miller, Chelsea Myers, and Amanda Savage were all named to the second team All-Jayhawk and Region 6 squads.

Sanders stifled her opponents at the net with her 178 blocks, good for sixth in the country and second in the Jayhawk West, she also finished second on the team behind Simic with 367 kills.

Miller had a solid all-around season for the Lady Saints netting 341 kills and 402 digs while serving at a .952 clip and making just 30 passing errors in 473 attempts. Myers was the spine of the Lady Saints team that earned a second place conference finish as she played in every game of every match the entire season. She led the team in assists, was third in blocks and digs, and was fourth in aces.

Savage burst onto the scene for the Lady Saints after missing the first 11 matches of the season with a foot injury. She finished with a conference high 3.66 digs/game and registered a .938 serve receive percentage, good for 2nd on the team. She was the only libero picked on either the first or second team this season.

Although many Lady Saints received individual honors during the 2008 campaign, Seward County's season success came due to their team nature as every player on the team saw substantial playing time on the course of the year.

Tamren Hensley saw action in 81 games and recorded over two digs a game, fifth on the team while serving a team best .954 throughout the season.

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Haley Crosier was the life of the team in 2008 always keeping her teammates alive and on a positive note. She played in 44 games and accumulated 46 digs on the year.

Ami Wang gave coach Bert Luallen much needed depth at many positions as she recorded a hitting percentage of .350 on the year and converted on 26 of 48 set attempts through the course of the year.

Stephanie Jacquez played in 60 games in her first season as a Lady Saint and came up huge in three conference wins for the Lady Saints replacing All-Conference performer Lindsey Miller mid-season when she was hampered by an injury.

Adriann D'Amico played in 65 games and averaged 1.86 digs a game for the Lady Saints as a freshman and added a much needed weapon for coach Bert Luallen on the back line. Jenna Ginest finished her two- year stint with the Lady Saints in 2008 and saved her best for last as she recorded a career high 17 kills against conference rival Hutchinson in the Region 6 Tournament. Ginest finishes her career with 381 kills, 37 aces, and 167 blocks as a Lady Saint.

Heather Carter provided Luallen a formidable foe at the net for the Lady Saints this season. Carter averaged nearly a block a game and put away 64 kills in her 65 games played.

“Although we didn’t end up where we wanted to be in the end, I saw something inside of these ladies at the end of the year like I had never seen before,” Luallen said. “They played their hearts out through a long, tough season, and ultimately played their best toward the end of the season. I look forward to watching our sophomores play at the next level and those who decide to concentrate on their schooling, I look forward to watching

grow into successful young women in the coming years.

“This year’s freshmen showed me at the end of the season that they had what it is going to take to be leaders next year as sophomores, and I look forward to them grooming our next crop of newcomers into a successful team in 2009.”

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