

VOLLEYBALL

Balanced Knights have sights set high

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — Last year, the Lake-Lehman girls volleyball team was one of the premier teams in a very competitive Wyoming Valley Conference. That might not change this season.

Under second-year head coach, the Black Knights return a solid nucleus from last year's team, which finished with an impressive 15-4 record. Lake-Lehman lost in the quarterfinals of the District 2 Class 2A playoffs against Bishop Hoban.

The Black Knights are solid in all phases of the game, says Pickett.

"We're really not lacking in anything," said the former Lake-Lehman standout, who also coaches the boys team in the spring. "We have good senior leadership and we have some depth, as well. There's always room for improvement, not necessarily in wins and losses, but in trying to build better players."

Led by senior Marissa Harrison, the Black Knights could have enough talent to challenge defending District 2 champion Nanticoke Area, powerful Bishop Hoban, and defending WVC champion Crestwood for the conference title.

The power-hitting Harrison should be able to fill in the void left by the graduation of Hannah Sorber, who was one of the WVC's best players during the last two seasons.

"Marissa is an excellent player," Pickett said. "She's a very good outside hitter and a very good all-around hitter. We have some other nice players, as well."

Joining Harrison back from last year's starting lineup are seniors Megan Devine, Rebekah Williams and Vicki Lacek. Pickett is also counting on the play of a strong sophomore class, which includes Sarah Sorber, Lee Ann Grabski, Catherine Sullivan and Christie Simon.

"We have a tough group of



A group of Lake-Lehman volleyball players take a break during practice. The Black Knights hope to have another successful season.

girls," said the Lake-Lehman coach, who was an all-state player in 2000. "They're getting better and they're starting to gel. The seniors give us some good leadership and the younger players have some talent. We're definitely shooting for the playoffs. Why not? But it's too early in the season to start thinking about the playoffs."

Last year's conference Coach of the Year says there isn't a big difference between coaching the girls and boys programs.

"It's pretty much the same," said Pickett, who took over the reins of the girls and boys teams from longtime — and highly successful — head coach John Baranowski. "You have to learn how to make adjustments with the different personalities. You have to know who you can push and who you can't. But as far as strategy and things on the court, it's pretty much the same."

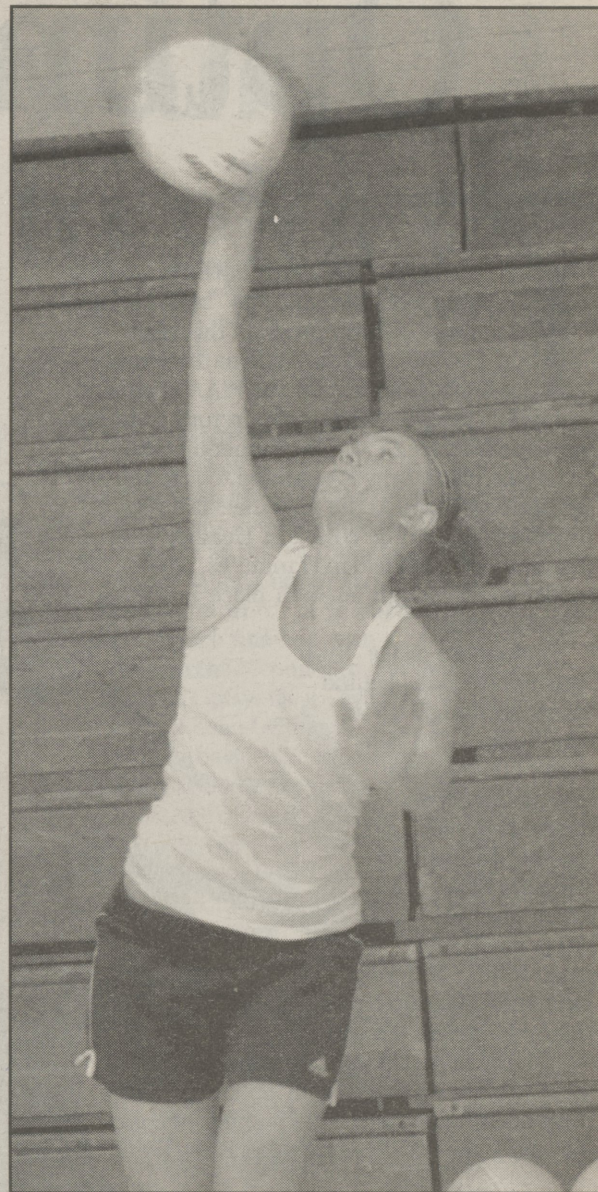
Pickett says he's looking forward to his second season with the girls.

"I think we're going to have a nice team," he said. "It should be a fun year."



PHOTOS FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Lake-Lehman's Lee Ann Grabski gets ready for the season.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Dallas senior Theresa Hines is one of two captains on the volleyball team.

Dallas hopes to serve notice

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. — After watching the Mountaineers stumble to a 3-15 record last season, opposing teams might not to take the Dallas girls volleyball team very seriously this year.

And that's just fine with head coach Mike Williams.

"I'm sure teams are going to be looking past us," said the third-year head coach, who was also an assistant coach for four years. "That's OK. We got the chance to play a lot of young players last year. They're coming into this season hungry. I think we're definitely a playoff team this year."

The Mountaineers lost three players to graduation from last year's team, which finished with a 3-15 record in the Wyoming Valley Conference. Another 10 players decided not to return this season.

"They said they didn't like losing," said Williams, who has

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