

Senior Pryor likes directing offense for third-ranked Trojans

By **DAVID VANTRESS**
 Sports writer



Center Grove senior Adria Pryor sets the ball during a recent volleyball match against Franklin. Pryor will play for the University of Toledo next year.

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 PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON

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Adria Pryor describes herself as a quiet leader.

Yet whenever the Center Grove volleyball team takes the court, the soft-spoken senior becomes a bit of a control freak.

Then again, that's precisely what the Trojans want her to be.

A University of Toledo recruit, Pryor is a 5-foot-10 setter who embraces the role of directing the plays and setting the pace for the Class 4A third-ranked Trojans.

"I like to control the game," said Pryor, a two-year starter. "The setter gets to do a little bit of everything. I call out the plays and make sure the court runs smoothly. When things go haywire, people look to the setter."

More often than not, things go smoothly for the Trojans, as evidenced by their 6-1 record and lofty ranking. They were No. 1 before last week's loss against Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference rival Carmel.

During good times and bad, Pryor is the player the Trojans most often look to for direction.

Pryor enjoys providing it.

Whether setting up a play for a front-row hitter or shouting encouragement at a critical moment, Pryor takes pride in knowing when to go with the flow and when to try to stem a negative tide with words or actions.

"Volleyball is a game of momentum," she said. "One bad point can lead to several more bad points if you let it."

Besides providing emotional lifts and a steadying influence, Pryor's other main job is to set the table for the Trojans' front-line players.

Sarah Dooms, a 5-9 senior outside hitter, has played two high school seasons with Pryor, as well as two club seasons with Team Indiana. Dooms praises Pryor's leadership and play-making abilities.

"She has a gift of being able to talk to you and tell you what she wants in a positive, motivational way," Dooms said. "She's fun to play with because she's so competitive."

"You can just see the fire in her eyes on the floor."

Pryor and Dooms have developed a special chemistry on the court. Pryor knows where Dooms likes the ball placed for kills, and Dooms knows to look for the ball there.

"Sarah likes the ball quick, and she likes it high," Pryor said. "She's got an amazing vertical leap,

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Name: Adria Pryor

Age: 17

High school: Center Grove

Sport: Volleyball

Position: Setter

College: Orally committed to University of Toledo

Family: Father, Brad; mother, Jama; sister, Gretchen, 14

Hobbies: Volleyball

Favorite professional athlete: Kerri Walsh, U.S. beach volleyball player



Center Grove volleyball player Adria Pryor serves during a recent match against Franklin. Pryor is the setter for the Class 4A third-ranked Trojans.

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so she wants the ball as high as possible so the defense can't block it."

That's just one example of what a good setter learns to do, Center Grove coach Deb McClurg said.

"Adria has to strategize for three hitters," McClurg said. "In addition to athleticism, you need intelligence.

"You have to spot weaknesses in the defense, make a quick adjustment and put the ball where the hitters can take advantage of those weaknesses."

A setter also needs to be able to step back and let others get the credit for points, Pryor said.

"(Setters) don't get the glory," Pryor said. "But we do have the satisfaction of knowing that we set up that big kill the crowd cheered."

Pryor is the latest in a line of standout setters at Center Grove. Players including Sara Heldman, Dana Daprile, Johanna Thompson, Kerri Byrum and Kim Harris have gone on to play at the NCAA Division I or II level.

Pryor will join that club next year at Toledo, where she'll be reunited with former Center Grove teammate Bethany Irwin, who is a sophomore at Toledo.

But for the moment, Pryor's goal is doing her part to help the Trojans win a state championship.

Although last week's loss cost the Trojans the No. 1 ranking, Pryor said they learned from their mistakes in that match and still will be front-runners in the championship race.

"We just didn't show up," Pryor said. "We played very selfish, and that's what happens when you play like that. We know we're better than that.

"Hopefully, that loss will be a nice kick in the butt for us. It's all about getting to state for us."