



July 13, 2007

Pop Tarts 3rd at nationals

By Paul Shepherd

Star correspondent

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For Brian Murray, coach of the Team Indiana Volleyball Club Evil Pop Tarts 14-and-under team, qualifying for the USA Junior Olympic championships was a huge accomplishment.

That the team went on to place third in the nation in the Open Division in its age group was, for Murray, icing on the . . . er, Pop Tart.

"For a third-year club to have a group of kids that dedicated and finish that well this early in the club's existence is a huge statement about how hard these kids have worked since they've been playing," said Murray, the club's director and head coach at Brebeuf Jesuit.

The Open Division is the top division in the Junior Olympics. The Evil Pop Tarts qualified by placing third in March in a national qualifier in Indianapolis. The team went 6-0 in its initial pool play at the nationals before falling 19-25, 25-18, 15-13 to Team Z from Cincinnati.

Kiva Red of Louisville, Ky., went on to defeat Team Z in the championship match.

The team includes Carmel residents Beth Reibold and Sarah McRoberts. Both will be freshmen this fall at Carmel High School.

Reibold said the matches were intense.

"You just feel so tense when you're playing because it's nationals, but it's fun," said Reibold, a middle blocker. "Everyone is extra cheery. We cheer louder, and it's fun. We've never even gotten this (far). It was amazing."

Other team members who will be freshmen at north suburban-area high schools are Jeme Obeime and Sloane White (Brebeuf), Hillary Porter (Noblesville) and Chandler Chapman (Zionsville).

Other Indiana-based teams featuring local players also fared well at nationals.

The Circle City 18 Purple finished ninth in Open 18. That team included Carmel's Rebecca Murray and Cathedral's Lauren McIntyre and Julie Sylvester.

The Munciana Samurai tied for 11th in Open 18. Its members include Christiana Gray and Yvonne Marten (Cathedral) and Lauren Rapp (Park Tudor).

The Munciana Wildkats tied for 19th in Open 16. That team included Elizabeth Holt (Carmel), Brittany Lee and Kathryn Treadway (Cathedral), Jillian Hicks (Heritage Christian) and Jamie Holpuch (Noblesville).

The Circle City 15 Purple placed 26th in Open 15 and included Carmel sophomore Emily Reber.