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ALL-NORTH VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Ability, desire push Hilary Eppink

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As a setter at Yorktown High School and Ball State University, Stacie Pagnard played with some top-notch volleyball players.

She has seen some more great talent in her two seasons as a coach at Westfield, but perhaps none as unique as 6-foot-2 junior Hilary Eppink, who is the 2007 All-North Player of the Year.

"I don't think I've ever played with a girl who has more physical ability," Pagnard said. "You can't find a 6-2 girl that has the quickness that she has. She has the physical ability, but she also has the desire and the passion to get better, and I think that's going to help her be successful in college."

Eppink became one of the Midwest's top recruits after last year's club season with Team Indiana. Big Ten and SEC schools, as well as defending national champion Nebraska, recruited her, but Eppink verbally committed to Notre Dame in October.

This fall, Eppink led the Shamrocks with 400 kills, 140 blocks and 42 aces and set the school's career kills record in earning Indiana Coaches of Girls Sports Association Class 4A All-State honors.

"I became a little bit smarter this year with being able to find the holes on the court and mixing up my shots," Eppink said.

"I think the thing that stuck out most in my mind is that when you look at her numbers, she had 400 kills, but her errors were very minimal," Pagnard added. "She's an extremely smart player now, whereas last year, she was all about the power. She has a little bit of finesse to go with the abilities that she has."

The Shamrocks went 24-7 this year. Westfield beat Carmel during the regular season, but the Greyhounds avenged that loss in the semifinals of the Hamilton Southeastern Sectional.

"I was a little disappointed that we didn't beat Carmel (in the sectional), but I thought overall our season was great," Eppink said. "We accomplished a lot of things Westfield hasn't been able to accomplish in a long time."

Pagnard said Eppink became more of a leader this season.

"Being on varsity as a freshman, she was very intimidated and very passive," Pagnard said. "This year, she was a lot more vocal and was a leader on the court and off the court."

Eppink is deciding whether to stick with Team Indiana or jump to Munciana for this year's club season.

"I think I've gotten a lot better," Eppink said. "I've had great coaching with Stacie and from club, so I think I improved a lot this year."

Past selections

In past years, The Indianapolis Star selected an All-North team that included Northside high schools in Indianapolis. Here is a list of winners:

Players of the Year

2006 -- Lauren McIntyre, Cathedral.

2005 -- Sam Gray, Brebeuf Jesuit.

2004 -- Danita Merlau, Cathedral.

2003 -- Alexa Montefalco, Cathedral.

2002 -- Melissa Popp, Bishop Chatard.

2001 -- Sarah Obras, Pendleton Heights.

2000 -- Leigh Marcum, Noblesville, and Sarah Obras, Pendleton Heights.

1999 -- Leigh Marcum, Noblesville, and Jenna Passman, Westfield.

1998 -- Lauren Schneider, Carmel.

1997 -- Kara Hidinger, Zionsville.

1996 -- Sarah Beck, Carmel.

Coaches of the Year

2006 -- Michelle York, Heritage Christian.

2005 -- Brian Murray, Brebeuf Jesuit.

2004 -- Jill Starliper, Chatard.

2003 -- Brian Murray, Brebeuf Jesuit.

2002 -- Jill Starliper, Chatard.

2001 -- Jill Almodovar, Noblesville.

2000 -- Scott Hall, Pendleton Heights.

1999 -- Joe Marcum, Noblesville.

1998 -- Joe Marcum, Noblesville, and Mitzi Bockelman, Westfield.

1997 -- Rhonda Schafer, Zionsville.

1996 -- Linda Bailey, Frankton.