

November 15, 2007

ALL-SOUTH VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR: JADYN YARLING

## Freshman libero plays the game with passion

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Certain positions seem to stand out in certain sports.

In football, it's the quarterback. In baseball, it's the pitcher. In volleyball, it's the outside hitter.

But Center Grove volleyball coach Deb McClurg was reminded after almost every match that the Trojans' diminutive freshman libero was something special.

"Other than your hitters, you usually don't see people standing out," McClurg said.

"But when I've got people coming up and saying, 'Who's that No. 10?' and they noticed the passion she played with, that tells you something."

No. 10 is Jadyn Yarling, The Greenwood Star's Player of the Year. The All-South team consists of players from Johnson County schools.

"It's going to be exciting to watch the rest of her high school career," McClurg said.

Yarling's goal was to make the varsity as a freshman, but admits some of her individual success surprised her.

"Not having any seniors, we all had to step up and be leaders," she said.

The 5-4 Yarling was raised in a volleyball family. JeanAnna Yarling, her mother, played and was the head coach at Southwestern High School. Lee Yarling, her father, played in adult programs across the state with his wife.

"I definitely grew up knowing the game and learned to love it," Jadyn said. "They've definitely been there for me and helped me learn how to play."

But Jadyn's favorite sport as a young child was tennis. That all changed when she attended a volleyball camp at Columbus North High School when she was 10, her mother said.

"She never touched a racquet again," JeanAnna said. "She always had me and her father out in the yard, working on technique and working on footwork."

The younger Yarling knew she would never be one of the taller players on the team. Thus, she poured her heart into being a libero, the full-time, back-row defensive specialist. The position wasn't even part of Indiana high school volleyball until 2005.

Players who excel at it must be quick and unafraid to do the dirty work -- specifically, diving and digging out hard-hitting kill attempts by the opposition.

"The libero is usually one of the most tenacious kids," McClurg said.

"She's committed herself to that spot. That's her baby. A lot of kids just want to hit the ball and grab all the glory. But she's not very tall and she's made that commitment."

The season ended in strange fashion for Center Grove, which lost to Perry Meridian in the Class 4A Franklin Sectional championship match, snapping its streak of 11 consecutive

sectional titles.

"It was a big shock," Yarling said of the sectional loss. "I guess it just made us realize we're going to have to work pretty hard."