

Dahl's hunger drove the Vikings

5A MVP » Pleasant Grove outside hitter became a student of the game.

By **KYLE GOON**
The Salt Lake Tribune

After this year's volleyball season ended, Kim Dahl decided to attend Pleasant Grove's basketball team tryouts. The 6-foot senior hadn't played in two years, but she wanted to see if she still had any passion for basketball left.

After one day of practice, the answer was clear to Dahl: Nope.

"I just wanted to make sure that basketball is not my thing," Dahl says. "Volleyball is my passion. It makes me so much more excited, and it's just fun for me all the time."

Volleyball is more like an addiction for Dahl: The outside hitter soaks up the game like few high school players can, watching hours of film and game footage and responding even to the most subtle coaching suggestions. Her athleticism gave her potential, but her voracious appetite for improvement allowed her to fulfill expectations and lead the Vikings back into the 5A championship game.

It is this restless desire to make herself and her team better that makes Dahl *The Tribune's* 5A most valuable player.

"She's one of the top players in the state in terms of talent, but she really knows the game," coach Jamie Schapper says. "She leads by example and the way she supports her team. She's one of the most coachable players I've ever had."

As Pleasant Grove fell to third place in Region 4 a year after going undefeated in region play and winning it all, Dahl tried to keep the bar high. Headed into a tournament semifinal against a favored Bingham team, she helped set the tone for the Vikings.

"I think the team looked up to me because we lost so many good players," Dahl says. "We just practiced really hard, and I think going into the game, we all thought we could beat them."

What transpired was what both Dahl and Schapper call the team's most complete performance. Pleasant Grove was able to shut down the Miners in a tight five-set battle. Dahl had 21 kills and five aces.

"She always knew what we were good enough to accomplish," Schapper says.



AL HARTMANN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
5A volleyball MVP Kim Dahl helped lead Pleasant Grove to the championship match.



RICK EGAN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
Setter Ciara Parker, the Class 4A MVP from Snow Canyon, dished out 823 assists this season.

Parker set standard for the Warriors

4A MVP » Snow Canyon team has benefited from unselfish play of *Tribune's* two-time honoree.

By **PAIGE FIELDSTED**
Special to *The Tribune*

Setters sometimes are overshadowed by the hitters who put the ball away, but Snow Canyon setter Ciara Parker has earned her share of glory.

For the second season in a row Parker has been named *The Tribune's* 4A MVP, but the junior isn't too concerned with the awards.

"It's pretty cool and it's an honor because I know how many good players there are in the 4A classification, Parker said.

"As I've gained experience I've grown in the sense that I'm more mature and want to help make my team successful by playing hard every chance I get and be the very best teammate I can, regardless of whether anyone notices or not."

While Parker has earned her spot as one of the top setters in the state, averaging more than 20 assists a game, not everyone is convinced that it's because of her own hard work, but rather because her mom, Alaina Parker, is head coach of the five-time Snow Canyon champions.

"There will be people that blog that she is only the MVP because she is the coach's daughter and people diminish what she does on the court," Alaina Parker said.

"I tell them to watch her play and then tell me she doesn't deserve what she gets. Watch her and you'll see the caliber of player she is."

Parker's statistics make their own case as the setter dished out 823 assists over the past season and served 22 aces in the four-game state tournament alone.

While Parker loves setting her hitters up for the kill and serving balls no one can return, her favorite thing about volleyball is digging.

"My favorite thing is when the other team just crushes the ball and you get a dig and steal their thunder," Parker said. "It's the best feeling to take their kill away."

No doubt Garfield earned her title ring

3A MVP » "Spud" was the leader of Morgan's championship team.

By **JON CLIFFORD**
Special to *The Tribune*

When Ashley Garfield was less than a year old, her mom walked into the kitchen and found her covered in dirt, gnawing on raw potatoes.

And the nickname "Spud" was born.

"It doesn't really apply now," said Garfield, a senior at Morgan High and *The Tribune's* Class 3A MVP. "Now I like my potatoes cleaned and cooked."

Garfield cooked up a 3A state championship for the Trojans last month, capping a 23-2 season with a state tournament MVP performance. Morgan lost one game in four rounds, and swept Juan Diego with the help of Garfield's 12 kills and nine digs.

It was Garfield's second state crown, the first since the Trojans won it all her freshman year. But unlike in 2007, Garfield is eager to get the championship ring to commemorate the recent title.

"We were ordering rings and Spud said she didn't want to order one," Morgan coach Liz Wiscombe said. "She said she wanted one that she had worked for."

An unusual act, to say the least.

"When you're a freshman, you think you're going to win eight state championships," Garfield said. "Even though I got in and played in the state game, I didn't feel like I had earned it. So I didn't get one."

The unquestioned leader on the team, Garfield's determination and focus set the tone for the Trojans.

"With Spud, it was always, 'Get me the ball,'" Wiscombe said. "She was always very calm, and really was the leader. She and the other four seniors fit together like puzzle pieces. They were all really close."

Garfield's future involves a different ball and net. The two-sport standout will play basketball next year at BYU.

"I couldn't tell you which sport I love more," Garfield said. "I got some looks for volleyball, made a couple of visits, but [BYU] just felt right."



AL HARTMANN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
3A volleyball MVP, Ashley Garfield from Morgan, will play basketball for BYU next year.



RICK EGAN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
Kelsi Meyer, 2A MVP from San Juan, was one of only two seniors on the team this year.

Meyer led Broncos to the top once again

2A MVP » The youngest of four sisters to play at San Juan earns a ring.

By **KYLE GOON**
The Salt Lake Tribune

Kelsi Meyer knows what it's like to be last. She is the youngest one of four sisters to play volleyball at San Juan under coach Cassy Moon. This year, she was one of the last players remaining who logged substantial minutes in the Broncos' 2007 championship.

She also knows what it feels like to finish behind. During her sophomore and junior years, the San Juan dynasty — which accounted for 10 championships in the previous 13 years — was briefly in remission. In 2008, the Broncos were third, but in 2009, the team didn't even place.

While one championship ring is certainly nothing to be upset about, Meyer's sisters had two, or even three. And she only had her last year of high school volleyball to try to get another for herself and San Juan.

"It was hard, that's for sure," Meyer says. "This year, though, I think everybody got really close. We all just clicked, and it made it a lot easier."

Led by Meyer — one of only two seniors — the Broncos made it back to the championship match for the first time in three years. And despite having a young core, San Juan showed championship form, using a 16-point rally in the third set to seize control against Enterprise and then closed out on a tight fourth set to win it all.

Even when Meyer didn't lead with her explosive spikes, which were good for 32 kills, she led her team emotionally as well. It's why she is *The Tribune's* 2A player of the year.

"I'm really excited," teammate Lindsey Christensen said immediately after the match. "We wanted to win this one for Kelsi."

It was the crowning achievement for a tremendous team and a tremendous player who has an uncommon love for the game.

"She is a player we could rely on to bury the ball when it was needed," Moon says. "She is a fun kid who was usually laughing and enjoying most moments of volleyball."

Despite pressure, Norris had record year

1A MVP » Panguitch all-star set two new state marks for kills and won the 1A title.

By **PAIGE FIELDSTED**
Special to *The Tribune*

Kalani Norris is no stranger to being the best player on the court.

She was named last year's *Tribune* volleyball 1A MVP after leading her team to its second state title in three years.

This year the Panguitch all-star has done it again.

By winning two consecutive state championships, notching a 69-game winning streak and setting two state kill records, Norris is at the top again.

But being the go-to player on the floor doesn't come without some pressure.

"I definitely felt pressure, especially when we played the harder teams because I knew that for us to do well and win I had to have a really good game, and it made me nervous," Norris said.

Despite the nerves, Norris was able to do some pretty amazing things this season — including breaking the single-season kill record and the career kill record.

But more important than her individual records was leading her team to three state championships in four years and keeping the Bobcats' record-breaking win streak alive.

"It was so awesome to be able to get that many wins as a team," Norris said.

"Our team really led each other, and the whole team was great. I'm glad we were able to keep it up, and it feels great."

Norris recently signed a letter of intent to play volleyball at UVU next fall, an accomplishment her dad and coach, Troy Norris, said has been a long time coming.

"It's such a relief because it's something she's wanted for a long time," Troy Norris said.

"We had a coach tell us when she was 10 that she had what it takes to play D-1 ball, and it's always stuck with her. It's really neat to see your kids achieve their goals."



AL HARTMANN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
1A volleyball MVP Kalani Norris, from Panguitch, led her team to two straight championships.

Colts' first-year leader possessed credibility right out of the gate

By **KYLE GOON**
The Salt Lake Tribune

It had been a long day for the Cottonwood volleyball team. The Colts had escaped a five-set battle with Layton, and the reward was playing a tough Taylorsville team after only a short break. The girls had dropped the first set when their first-year coach, Jenna Neves, came to pick them up.

"I don't remember what particular joke she said, but we have this team saying where we all say, 'Huzzah!'" said senior Kennedy Ayre. "She just pulled us aside, said

that, and we just felt better. It helped us relax and calm down."

Cottonwood would go on to win the match, claiming fifth place in the 5A tournament for its best finish since 2007, when it was a 4A program. The team also went undefeated in region play for the first time since 2004.

The Colts players — immensely talented in their own



Jenna Neves
» Has a love of the game.

COACH OF THE YEAR » COTTONWOOD'S JENNA NEVES

right — credit the upbeat leadership and easygoing mentoring of Neves as a huge factor in their success. It is what makes Neves *The Tribune's* volleyball coach of the year.

"Cottonwood has such a good volleyball tradition, I wanted to make sure I didn't ruin what these girls had built," Neves says. "They respected me, they believed in me, and they worked hard for me as well. It's been a great experience."

Following the retirement of longtime coach Bob Berrett, Neves stepped into the head-coaching role after two years as an assistant.

Whereas Berrett's successful track record as a coach spoke volumes, Neves' four-year career as a setter at BYU gave her credibility. Being eight years removed from her days at Skyline also helped her relate to her players.

"She really helped the girls a lot and spent a lot of time on

the court playing with us," senior Alydia Fields says. "A lot of times, she let us figure things out on our own on the court, but she stepped in whenever we got in a rut."

After rolling through Region 2, Neves said losing matches turned out to be a lot harder than she thought. Players saw their coach carry as much weight as the rest of them when they dropped a contest against eventual runner-up Pleasant Grove.

"I think she took a lot of responsibility, and she would talk to us afterwards about it," Fields says. "She would ask us,

"I tried to prepare you guys, but could I have done anything differently?" But I think she did everything she could."

Players say the most important thing she tried to bring to practice was playing with passion and a love of the game. It's also the same reason Neves knows she'll be coaching down the road: She loves it.

"I just love seeing someone learn a new skill and being happy when they succeed," Neves says.

"I just know I want to be a coach."

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