

VOLLEYBALL



Rob Hunt | The Herald Bulletin

Alexis Baney (2) holds up the sectional championship trophy while **Daya Greene** (3) shows off the game ball to their celebrating teammates after Madison-Grant defeated Eastern for the Sectional 39 championship.

Reigning and defending Argylls claim third straight sectional title

ROB HUNT
THE HERALD BULLETIN

FAIRMOUNT — After graduating six key seniors from the 2021 sectional championship team, expectations were not as high for the 2022 Madison-Grant volleyball team, a team that would be playing with a bullseye on its back all season.

But driven by their two senior stars, the Argylls have won 12 straight matches after overcoming a sluggish start to knock off

Madison-Grant	Eastern
3	1

Eastern 3-1 (22-25, 25-16, 25-15, 25-15) and win their third straight sectional championship and the 18th in the program’s rich history.

“It’s a lot of pressure on these kids, even on the younger kids who aren’t seniors, to be successful,” M-G coach Kayla Jump said. “I don’t know if people know how much stress

they’re put under for that. A lot of people wouldn’t play with our expectations, and for me that’s the best part. If you don’t have expectations to hit a certain level, you’re just wasting your time. I’m really proud of them.”

At the outset, the Comets were the aggressors, taking advantage of Argyll errors and an offense that sputtered early. M-G (27-5) was not playing like the 10th-ranked team in Class 2A, and the players knew it.

After dropping the first

set and playing even with Eastern (16-17) through much of the second set, seniors Alexis Baney and Daya Greene had a message for their teammates — many of whom are post-season full-time players for the first time.

“We realized that it was time that, if we wanted to win, that we had to pick it up because they were out-working us, and we were not working hard enough,” Baney said. “We were

See **ARGYLLS** on B2

ARGYLLS

CONTINUED FROM B1

making mistakes on dumb little errors. We weren't talking. We were getting really mad. Then, when we're mad, we yell at each other. But we got it together and did it as a team."

The message worked.

Including a five-point service run from Baney, the Argylls outscored the Comets 13-4 to close out Set 2 and 63-34 the balance of the match. They very much looked the part of the sectional favorites.

"We started off pretty slow, and after that first set, we said 'Oh, we cannot do this,'" Greene said. "We're not going five. We're ending this. We got in the huddle, and Kayla really ripped us ... after that, we've really got to get it together."

Jump said it was less about mechanics and playing well but more about having fun and celebrating the positives early in the match. Once the excitement and the smiles were back, M-G looked more like itself.

"We got a little bit faster, and once we got our speed back up, we started having fun," Jump said. "I'm yelling at them to celebrate, and that's a little disheartening because I'm a big smile



Rob Hunt | The Herald Bulletin

Alexis Baney sends over one of her 18 kills during Madison-Grant's 3-1 win over Eastern on Saturday night.

person, and when I yell, I'm loud. Even when we scored a cheap point, they were just walking around and I said, 'This is no fun.' I think we started having more fun and got more excited after each point."

A Maddy Moore ace gave the Argylls set point, and Maegan Wilson put away one of her seven kills to even the match at 1-1.

From there, Baney took over.

The 6-foot senior recorded two early blocks to give M-G a lead it never relinquished in the third set at 5-3 before a booming kill from Baney pushed the lead to 11-6. Junior Ella Brummet added three of

her six kills during the all-important third set as the Argylls took a 2-1 lead.

A Demie Havens block on the opening point of the fourth set charged up the M-G bench, but it wasn't until three straight Baney kills made it a 19-11 lead the Argylls could sense the end was in sight. On championship point, sophomore Johnna Hiatt's sixth kill clinched Madison-Grant's third straight title.

"It feels great. It really does," Baney said. "You really never know at sectional time when the last time you play is, especially since this is the last time I'm playing (at home) ever. It is really sad, but I'm glad to have the team behind

me. We had a great connection this year."

Baney finished the match with 18 kills, eight blocks and two aces, Moore had 34 assists and four kills and Havens wound up with six kills and two blocks.

It was a record-setting day individually for Greene, who recorded 34 digs and two aces in the championship match. Earlier in the day, during M-G's 3-0 sweep of Tipton in the semifinal, Greene had 31 digs and passed Maddi Evans for the program record for digs in a season. She now owns the school record for digs in a match, season and for her career.

"I remember when I was little watching Maddi, and I always wanted to be like her, do as good as she did and pass her records," Greene said. "It really shows me that I've worked hard to get this record, and I'm getting up there, comparable to her."

Jenna Odle — daughter of former Indiana University basketball player Jarrad Odle — led the Comets with 12 kills, three blocks and eight assists while Adalyn Downing added 13 assists.

The Argylls will return to familiar territory for next week's regional when they face 2A second-ranked Wapahani (28-5) at noon in the second semifinal match.