

St. Mary's Volleyball Takes Down Gonzaga 3-0

By Kevin D. Shallat



The St. Mary's Gaels starting lineup

Photo Tod Fierner

West Coast Conference foe Gonzaga University was considered the favorite coming into the first league game against the St. Mary's women's volleyball team Thursday, Sept. 27, but that didn't stop the Gaels from winning three straight games.

An athletic and talented team, the Bulldogs were 11-4 coming into this match, and St. Mary's, despite their 8-4 record, got off to a slow start. The Gaels seemed to have too much adrenaline flowing early on, as a few of their serves sailed off past the back line, yet after a few cross court kills from outside hitter Lauren Jaeckel, the Gaels were able to jump out to a 20-13 lead.

The lead did hold for long, however. The Bulldogs battled back with some powerful kills of their own and tie the score three times, with the score hitting 31-31 in the first game. Outside hitter Megan York dropped a beautifully timed delayed shot right in the middle of the court to go up by one, and the Gaels finally got one last point to win the nail-biter with an illegal set by Gonzaga.

The second game was the least stressful and most dominant game of the night for the Gaels. St. Mary's was able to correct their serving mistakes and turn them into an advantage in the second game. Sophomore libero Alita Fisher had a terrific game serving and led the team with three serving aces and



Christy Payne leaps to block a shot

Photo Tod Fierner

11 digs. While Fisher's serving was controlling the game for the Gaels, the Bulldogs could not get their serves to make it in-bounds. Gonzaga simply had too many unforced serving errors in the match – especially in this game.

Libero Erin Thompson came into the second game and used her minutes efficiently with a beautiful diving dig, which led to a Gael point. The game ended with the Gaels out serving and out hustling the Bulldogs to a 30-15 win.

The third game was highlighted by the Gael's smart, heads-up volleyball and solid defense. Middle blockers Shannon Lowell and Megan Burton had fantastic games with their over the net play. Lowell recorded seven kills and 10 blocks, and Burton had six kills and nine blocks in the match.

Freshman sensation York wasn't at the top of her game, yet still managed to record statistics that most players dream of. York hustled and spiked her way to 15 kills, 10 digs, and five blocks.

"She had a good match, she's always going to have a good match, but she didn't have her best match, not even close, but she helped her team win in lots of little ways," said Gaels Head Coach Rob Browning.

Catch the next Gaels game by checking the schedule online at:

www.SMCGaels.com