SPORTS

Renegade Revealed: Capt. Jennifer Covey

By LOUIS LAVENTURE
Sports editor

Being cut from a high school sports team can be devastating for impressionable teenagers. Just ask Michael Jordan. Jordan was cut from his varsity basketball team in his sophomore year 1979 and he used it as motivation to become arguably the greatest basketball player of all time. Jennifer Covey can relate to that story with a similar one of her own while attending Bay Area volleyball powerhouse Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose.

Archbishop Mitty has a nationally recognized volleyball program that includes two national championships in 2008 and 2009. The school attracts students from all over. That makes the competition for the team very stiff.

For this reason, Covey was cut her sophomore year taking away the sport that she “loved to play.”

“Afier I got cut my sophomore year, I was done. I was going to throw all of my volleyball stuff away and just move on,” Covey said. “My mom said no, to keep it all even on,” Covey said. “My mom said no, to keep it all even. Thankfully, I did because I ended up needing it.”

The two months that followed were different for Covey, but they ended up being a blessing in disguise that allowed her to branch out socially and regain her passion for the sport.

Covey discovered a world outside of volleyball that she had played since fifth grade at Holy Family. She was able to make new friends who she would normally not have the time to meet. She is still very close with several of them today.

“I started making other friends besides athletes,” Covey said. “Two of my closest friends I met my sophomore year and they are not athletes what so ever, but were very supportive and accepting.”

Eventually during the layoff, she began to miss playing volleyball. A few months later Covey heard of open tryouts for a club team and decided it was time to get back in to the sport.

She made the club team and continued to play throughout her high school, which gave her the pedigree to become a team captain on one if not the most successful Lady Renegade volleyball teams ever.

Teammate Elise Menicou spoke highly of the hard-hitting soprornate captain Covey.

“She is always the one who comes through in the clutch for us,” Menicou said. “Her jump serve is awesome and has helped us a lot because sometimes teams don’t expect it and aren’t ready.”

Coach Jeremy Penhalor, who has known Covey since her club days, has nothing but positive things to say about her.

“She has fought through injuries, never making excuses. Instead she leads by example, doing the best she can,” Penhalor said. “Her jump serve is impressive, hard and she has tremendous amount of power.

Jennifer Covey prepares to take the ball during a match in her senior year.

Despite having a stellar 19-4 record, the Lady Renegades received a relatively low seed at No. 12, which gave them a tough matchup against the fifth seeded Sierra College.

It is the first time the Lady Renegades have made the playoffs in 12 years and set the bar extremely high for all teams that follow.

Ohlone got settled in late, but it was a little too late and lost in three sets: 25-15, 25-14 and 25-22.

“I think we just played better,” Covey said. “I felt it come back over the net. I am still working on my serve, but it was a little too late.”

Covey experienced tendinitis since last season.

“It kind of started at the end of last season and then I felt it come back over the summer,” Covey said. “I did a lot of rehab and for the most part it felt better. I just do a lot of exercises and tape up.”

Covey’s shoulder got better as the season progressed, which helped her lead Ohlone to a 19-4 overall record and 8-2 in conference play. The Lady Renegades made the playoffs but lost in three sets to Sierra College in Rocklin Nov. 20.

Covey could have let being cut or even her injury stop her from succeeding in the sport she loves. Instead, much like Jordan did, she used it as motivation for her success.

“I just go with the flow and never get stressed,” Covey said. “I tend to stay calm when things aren’t going my way or don’t work out.”

Covey was even bite by the coaching bug a few years back. She’s now in her second year and first as a head coach.

Jennifer Covey prepares for the next rally.

She loves working with kids and said she hopes to make a career out of it, eventually utilizing her occupational therapy major.

Covey also puts her family first and is very close with her parents as well as her two siblings and many others. Covey made it clear that her family would have a clear impact on her future decisions.

“I am really close with my family, who has always been there for me through my best and worst times,” Covey said.

“Ideally, I would like to stay here locally because of how close I am to my family, but I know I have to do what is best for me and will support that.”

Covey would like to continue playing following her Ohlone College career, but is also prepared to pursue her educational and professional goals if that is not in the cards for her.

Penhalor talked also talked about Covey in regards to what she means to the team and her plans following Ohlone.

“Hitters will get their kills but it is all the other stuff that makes an outside hitter great and Jenn does it all,” Penhalor said. “I hope she moves on to contribute to another successful volleyball program.”

Whatever path Covey chooses, she is sure to have a lot of support and motivation to pave the way for her success.

Volleyball loses opening playoff match to Sierra

By LOUIS LAVENTURE
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One of the most successful seasons in Ohlone College volleyball history came to an end Nov. 20 in Rocklin when the Lady Renegades lost their opening round playoff game to lost Sierra College.

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COURTESY OF / JENNIFER COVEY

2012 Ohlone College volleyball team and coaches lined up after the playoff loss to Sierra College. Back row: Jackie Claess, Emily Marden, Elise Menicou, Selina Samaranon, Brittany Creed, Lindsey Orlando, Melissa Randall, Middle row: Jeremy Penaflor, Nicole Rodamer, Olivia Downing, Marcela Chinn, Lindsey Calabrese, Taylor Presley. Bottom: Jennifer Covey.

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Jennifer Covey on rival Chabot College.

Jennifer Covey prepares to take the ball during a match in her senior year.

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