

1997 STATE FINALS REVIEW

For the first time in a sport other than football, the volleyball tournament series was staged in four classes as the 26th Annual IHSAA Volleyball State Finals were conducted on Nov. 8, 1997 at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis Cathedral (Class 3A) and Muncie Central (Class 4A) won their first volleyball state titles, while Clinton Prairie (Class A) celebrated its second and Muncie Burriss (Class 2A) its state-leading ninth.

The 1997-98 school year marked the 25th anniversary of the first IHSAA state tournament series in a girls sport. On Dec. 9, 1972, South Bend St. Joseph's defeated Ben Davis 15-5, 15-5 at Beech Grove High School in the inaugural IHSAA Volleyball State Finals. That tournament saw 270 teams begin play at the sectional level. In comparison, a total of 381 schools and 5,091 athletes began competition at the sectional level in this year's tournament series.

CLASS A

Clinton Prairie used a 13-0 run in the first game and went on to a 15-1, 15-8 victory over Bloomfield in the Class A championship match of the 1997 IHSAA Volleyball State Finals.

After an even start with several sideouts, Clinton Prairie took control at 2-1, and then finished the game with its 13-point run.

Clinton Prairie finished the season with an 18-match winning streak and a 31-8 record. The Gophers also won a state championship in 1984, and were a state finalist in 1985. Each of those teams was coached by Connie Garrett.

Toni Smith, a junior outside hitter, led Clinton Prairie with nine kills on 13 attacks, and also had 13 digs. Elizabeth Friedrich, a senior setter, led the Gophers with 17 assists and 12 digs.

Melissa Cochrane, a senior middle hitter for Bloomfield, recorded 12 attacks and four kills. Bloomfield, making its first appearance in the IHSAA Volleyball State Finals, finished 31-6.

As a team, Clinton Prairie had 23 kills to Bloomfield's 15. Bloomfield had only one service error in 26 attempts.

Elizabeth Friedrich, a senior at Clinton Prairie High School, was named the 1997 recipient of the IHSAA Mental Attitude Award in Class A volleyball. Friedrich is the first athlete in Clinton Prairie history to win an IHSAA mental attitude award in any sport. Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship in Friedrich's name to Clinton Prairie High School.

CLASS 2A

Muncie Burriss ran off 13 unanswered points in the first game to seize control and post a 15-3, 15-4 triumph over Union County to complete an unbeaten season in the IHSAA Class 2A Volleyball State Finals.

It was the ninth IHSAA volleyball title for the Owls (39-0), all under the guidance of coach Steve Shondell. The other titles came in 1982, 1985, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994. This is the first season the IHSAA has sponsored a multiple-class tournament format.

Muncie Burriss lost only one game in its 39 matches this season, and came back to post a three-game victory over Class 3A state champion Indianapolis Cathedral during the regular season.

Muncie Burris was led by junior setter Melissa Wright with 17 assists. Junior outside hitter Hillary Toivonen recorded five kills, while senior Erica Myers and junior Stephanie Ballard had four kills each.

Union County, making its first IHSAA state finals appearance in any team sport, finished the season 35-2. The Patriots were led by freshman Lynette Moster with six kills in 14 attempts.

Ann MacMillan, a senior at Muncie Burris High School, was named the 1997 recipient of the IHSAA Mental Attitude Award in Class 2A Volleyball. MacMillan is the sixth athlete in Muncie Burris history to win an IHSAA mental attitude award. Five have come in volleyball.

Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship in MacMillan's name to Muncie Burris High School.

CLASS 3A

Indianapolis Cathedral outlasted determined Delta in a tight second game to post a 15-8, 15-12 victory in the IHSAA Class 3A Volleyball State Finals.

After winning the first game, Indianapolis Cathedral trailed 3-1 and 4-3 in the second game. After a 6-6 tie, the Irish never trailed again in the match that lasted 60 minutes.

Delta had entered sectional play ranked No. 1 in the coaches association poll, while Indianapolis Cathedral was No. 2. It was the first volleyball state title for Indianapolis Cathedral and the fifth state championship overall. The Irish were coached by Jean Kesterson. Delta was making its first appearance in the volleyball state finals.

Senior Sarah Stephens paced Indianapolis Cathedral (30-8) with 12 kills, and senior Cheryl Berg added 11. Junior setter Katie LaGrange of Delta recorded 21 assists to lead the Eagles (34-4).

Nicole Farrell, a senior at Indianapolis Cathedral High School, was named the 1997 recipient of the IHSAA Mental Attitude Award in Class 3A Volleyball. Farrell is the fifth athlete in Indianapolis Cathedral history to receive an IHSAA mental attitude award, and the first in volleyball. Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship in Farrell's name to Indianapolis Cathedral High School.

CLASS 4A

Muncie Central rallied from an 11-5 deficit in the third game to pull out a 7-15, 15-6, 15-11 triumph over Fort Wayne Northrop and win its first volleyball state title in the IHSAA Class 4A championship game.

Coached by Dave Shondell, the Bearcats avenged a three-game loss to Fort Wayne Northrop late in the regular season. Muncie Central finished the season 34-5, with the other losses to Class 2A state champion Muncie Burris (twice), Class 3A state champion Indianapolis Cathedral and to perennial Kentucky power Louisville Assumption.

Sophomore setter Meredith Fancher set the table with 37 assists for the No. 3-ranked Bearcats. In kills, Nicole Hill led the way with 12, followed by senior Marlie Eckelman with 11 and sophomore Carman Malone with 10.

Fort Wayne Northrop (38-3), ranked second in the final coaches poll of the season, was paced by sophomore setter Zehra Mecuk with 29 assists. Senior Stephanie Bishop had 13 kills and junior Kristin Frye had 11.

It was the 12th IHSAA state title for Muncie Central overall and the first in a girls sport.

Stephanie Bishop, a senior at Fort Wayne Northrop High School, was named the 1997 recipient of the IHSAA Mental Attitude Award in Class 4A Volleyball. Bishop is the eighth athlete from the school to receive an IHSAA mental attitude award and the second in volleyball. Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship in Bishop's name to Fort Wayne Northrop High School.