

LADY CATS ARE 1A REGIONAL CHAMPS



The Lady Cats celebrate on the floor after the nail-biting Regionals win against Southeast on October 28. The team heads to the 1A State Tournament on November 2, more details on Page 10.

**By Lady Cats Manager
Rylee Loebe**

On Friday and Saturday the Lady Cats went to Hulett to play in the 1A East Regional matches. Going into Regionals the Upton Lady Cats were seeded in the number one seed for the Northeast. For their first game on Thursday the Lady Cats played against the number four seeded H.E.M Miners. The Lady Cats were able to win the game in three sets with scores of 25-9, 25-17, and 25-4. Moving forward on the bracket the Lady Cats then went on to play against the number two seeded Rock River Longhorns. In the first set the Lady Cats were quickly able to gain the lead ahead of Rock River and won the set with a score of 25-17. In the second set the Lady Cats were slower to gain momentum but eventually they were able to get a run and finish the second set with a score of 25-18, and in the final set the Lady Cats closed out the game with a score of 25-14. With the win automatically sending them to State, and going into the Championship for the next day.

On Saturday the Lady Cats were playing in the Regional Championship against the Southeast Cyclones who were ranked number one in the southeast. In the first set the game was close with Southeast maintaining a one point lead ahead, the Lady Cats dropped the first set with a score of 23-25.

In the second set the Lady Cats were slow to gain momentum with a score of 7-21. The Lady Cats were able to make a comeback, but unfortunately weren't able to win the second set with a score of 22-25. In the third set the Lady Cats were able to bring more momentum to the table. With a close third set the Lady Cats were able to win it to send the game into a fourth set with a score of 28-26. In the fourth set the Lady Cats were able to get on a roll and win the fourth set sending the game into a fifth set with a score of 25-13. In the final set of the game with the set score of 2-2, it was anyone's game to take. With the intensity in the game the Lady Cats and Cyclones were neck and neck, but then the Lady Cats were able to gain excitement when they were able to take away Southeast's match point and tie the game 14-14. The Lady Cats then scored two more points winning the game and becoming the 1A East Regional Champions! The Lady Cats will be leaving to go to Casper Thursday, October 2nd and play for the State title. The Lady Cats will be going into state in the number one seed!

From Coach Mills: "We just came off of a very great tournament. There were moments of brilliance and then there were moments where I wondered where our team was. The game against Southeast was a battle for

us. We came in slow and on our toes and hadn't seen blocker like that since September. We found our pace and started to dig. That is what I love about these girls. They are competitors.

We make them compete against each other every day in practice so they are used to everything being a competition. Ultimately, our great blocking, tenacious defense and some solid serving won us the championship. But, all that to say, it was not easy. It was a lot of work and the intensity was some of the highest we had played at since we matched up with some 2A teams in Big Horn.

I am looking forward to this week, I have watched some film on our first opponent and if we come out ready and we come out swinging, we should be able to beat Riverside a second time. We need to serve well, and pass the ball well, because serving is one of their strengths. I feel we outmatch them on the number of hitters we can put into action easily, but that always depends on passing and digging.

If we can stay calm and not let the big atmosphere get to us, we should be able to pick away at the first team. At this point, it's one game at a time, we are looking forward to having a great tournament. What I hold in my hand is a team of athletes that know a whole lot about Casper. They know what it is to stand on a stage and hold up trophies of all kinds. I don't think they themselves will settle for anything less than bringing something home this weekend. I also want to give a huge shout out to our fan base. Lady Cats fans showed up in force in Hulett and everytime I looked up I saw a familiar face. Thanks for championing these girls!"