

Vikings' trophy at state was fourth straight



photos by Chris Johnson

Mossyrock's Andee Nelson (top), Faith Mulligan (middle) and Hailey Brooks perform a synchronized celebration at Yakima's SunDome on Thursday evening.

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as many weapons as we had, I think they were just a little stronger all the way around."

Mossyrock fought back in the third as the lead changed hands eight times. La Conner led 19-17 and 20-18 before Torrey pounded out the 19th point for the Vikings and they kept the momentum scoring six of the final seven points.

The Braves closed out the match with a 25-8 win in the fourth.

"Going into the final match against Tri-Cities Prep, I said if you want

people to think that was really the state championship game against La Conner, we've got to win," Nelson said. "You've got to go in and finish the match, because so many times if you lose that semifinal match you go to that last one and you lose that one too, not because you couldn't, but because that semifinal disappointment affects you so much so."

One of the most underrated talents in athletics, and probably in life, is showing up. The Vikings put behind the disappointment of not reaching the state championship match



Viking junior setter Morgan Houghtelling sets the ball against La Conner in their state semifinal on Friday.

for the fourth straight season and went out and beat the Tri-Cities Prep Jaguars 28-26, 25-19, and 25-18 to clinch the third place trophy.

"The first thing I said when I went into the locker room after the La Conner match was it can't be all or nothing," Nelson said. "We can't be just going for the championship or nothing. Third place is a pretty big deal and a lot of people would love to say, 'I took third place at state.' It's a great accomplishment and if we don't go into this match with that attitude, you're going to regret it later, so don't have any regrets. I think we were very tired, physically, and just emotionally taxed, but I thought we controlled the whole match. You can't have lapses and still come out ahead."

The Jaguars pounded out 18 kills in the opener as the two teams played evenly, but Mossyrock rallied from a 16-13 deficit and 26-25 scoring the final three points to win 28-26. They also trailed 16-13 in the second set, but won eight consecutive points and 11 of the final 14 for the 25-19 win. The clincher was similar as the Vikings won 25-18.

Mossyrock (19-2 overall, 10-0 league, 4-0 district, 3-1 state) brought home their fourth straight trophy and will lose seven seniors to graduation: Faith Mulligan, Andee Nelson, Amy Fitzhugh, Shania Hadaller, Jenny Brockway, Justus Stajduhar, and Jessica Boling.

"They've been a great group of kids," Nelson said. "Andee and Faith were big parts of the teams for all four years. They were playing all the way around. Some of them

didn't get to play as much, but still had very important roles on the team. Jenny, Amy and Justus are super positive and are great role models on how to behave. They are always positive and encouraging. Amy was a captain and really wanted us to play well. Justus was happy to be there no matter what her role was. Jenny is super positive and very smart. She can explain any part of the game to anyone. She played great when I did put her in throughout the season. She increased her skill from her freshman year to her senior year. She's a very good player and on any other team she's playing a whole lot more. Shania came back from her knee injury after the halfway point of our season, and that was definitely helpful. That was key. We have big shoes to fill, but it's amazing when one person leaves how much growth you can see in others. We look forward to filling those shoes."

Notes: Brockway, Emily Edgar and Mulligan all earned sportsmanship medallions during the tournament.

Andee Nelson summed up her career like this: "I think I am going to miss playing for my community. We have such great support in our town, that at every important game so many people would show up. We kind of made volleyball popular in our town which is so cool. I'll miss having my teachers ask me about the games. It's just fun



Mossyrock senior Andee Nelson pounds out one of her multiple kills against La Conner on Friday morning.



Mossyrock senior Shania Hadaller passes the ball against Liberty during their Thursday quarterfinal.



Mossyrock junior Emily Edgar reaches high for a block against La Conner in a semifinal on Friday in Yakima.

getting to talk about things that are very important to you when people actually care. I will miss being around all my friends and all the people I got to grow

up with. And I am going miss having my mom as my coach, but I am sure she will never stop coaching even when she's not my coach."



Viking senior Amy Fitzhugh celebrates a point against La Conner in their state tournament semifinal.



Mossyrock freshman Paige Houghtelling tips the ball past a Liberty defender in their quarterfinal match in Yakima's SunDome on Thursday evening.



Mossyrock's Faith Mulligan (left), Payton Torrey (middle) and Morgan Houghtelling along with the Vikings' bench scream during a point at Yakima's SunDome.

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