

BC3 volleyball squad crowned WPCC champs again

Pioneers win 3rd straight title and ninth under 19-year coach

Oct. 22, 2017



The Butler County Community College volleyball team is shown Saturday, Oct. 21, 2017, at BC3's Field House after the Pioneers won their third consecutive Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship. Front row, from left, assistant Belle Chiodo; Emilee Beck, Butler; Kelly Kabay, Butler; Brittney Bianco, Freeport; Autumn Rodgers, Butler; and Emily Magusiak, New Castle. Back row, from left, assistant Baylee Verner; assistant coach Jenn Barry; Madison Morella, Ellwood City; Mackenzie Craig, Karns City; Alexis Schneider, Butler; Kelsey Minnich, Armstrong; Haley Caldwell, Butler; assistant Mary Romano; and coach Rob Snyder.

(Butler, PA) Brittney Bianco had 35 assists and Emily Magusiak 11 kills as the Butler County Community College volleyball team on Saturday won its 14th Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference title since 1977, ninth under coach Rob Snyder and third in a row by sweeping the Community College of Beaver County.

BC3, the tournament's top seed, beat the Titans 25-16, 25-16 and 25-20 in the best-of-5 finals and moved to 17-5 entering this weekend's National Junior College Athletic Association Region

XX Division III championships. BC3 will defend its back-to-back NJCAA Region XX Division III crowns in a tournament it will host and one that will include Howard Community College (14-8) of Columbia, Md.; Montgomery County Community College (7-13) of Pottstown; and Pennsylvania Highlands Community College (14-9) of Johnstown.

BC3 is 1-1 against Pennsylvania Highlands in 2017 and 0-1 against Howard. It has not faced Montgomery.

Bianco, a sophomore setter and Freeport High graduate; Magusiak, a freshman middle hitter and New Castle Area High graduate; freshman opposite Mackenzie Craig, a Karns City Area High graduate; and sophomore middle hitter Autumn Rodgers, a Butler Area High graduate; were named to the WPCC all-conference team.

Snyder, who in 19 years at BC3 has compiled a 356-120 career mark, was selected as the WPCC coach of the year for the eighth time.

“By far the best we have played all season”

Freshman Haley Caldwell, a libero from Butler, had 17 digs in the championship against No. 3 seed CCBC and Rodgers had three blocks.

Serena Wingard, a freshman middle hitter from Western Beaver, had six kills for CCBC (14-21). Sophomore hitter Lauren Ranone, also from Western Beaver, had nine digs and sophomore setter Jessica Straub, of Beaver Falls, had nine assists.

BC3, which had a first-round bye, swept No. 4 seed Pitt-Titusville 25-7, 25-14 and 25-17 in the semifinals. CCBC swept sixth-seeded Westmoreland County Community College 25-23, 25-11 and 27-25 in the first round, and knocked off No. 2 seed Pennsylvania Highlands 26-24, 25-9, (23-25) and 25-18 in the semifinals.

The Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce was the tournament’s fifth seed.

By the numbers

Seasons in which the BC3 volleyball team won the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship:

2017-18; 2016-17; 2015-16; 2010-11; 2006-07; 2005-06; 2004-05; 2003-04; 2002-03; 1998-99; 1992-93; 1982-83; 1981-82; 1977-78.



Madison Morella (12), a freshman on the Butler County Community College volleyball team, goes up for a shot against Serena Wingard, of the Community College of Beaver County, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2017, in the finals of the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship. At right is CCBC’s Cortney Harden.

“We focused on peaking, and we wanted to be at our best today, and I think we were,” Snyder said. “All our hitters were in sync. We kind of eased up on practice during the week so our legs were fresh, and our aggressiveness came out and we were strong.”

“This is by far the best we have played all season.”

BC3 “basically outhustled us”

BC3 trailed only once in the first set against CCBC, at 8-7, before eventually rattling off 10 straight points to take a 23-11 lead. The Pioneers trailed only once in the second set, at 2-1, and never trailed in the third, which ended with a Bianco pass to Magusiak, whose shot over the net ricocheted off Wingard.

“They basically just outhustled us,” Wingate said.

BC3, CCBC coach Ron Voitius said, “is a good ballclub, all-around. They are solid.”

Bianco’s 35 assists in the championship were her most in 2017 since Sept. 30, when she had 37 in a sweep against Westmoreland.

“Everyone is starting to work really well together,” said Bianco, No. 2 on BC3’s all-time assist list with 1,179. “Chemistry-wise, everything is flowing. Our defense is working really hard. Our hitters are working really hard, getting to where we need to be on transitions and making smart decisions.”

While Bianco is “spectacular,” said Rodgers, whose three blocks against the Titans brought her team-leading total to 42, “she needs the rest of us to all do our jobs. And we are finally getting to the point where we all do our jobs really well.”

“It was really clicking”

Magusiak’s 11 kills against CCBC tied a season-high, and Craig added seven against the Titans to bring her team-leading total to 161.

“It was really clicking,” Craig said. “We both were so excited and pumped for this game. All our energy and power were going into those hits and putting them down.”

Like her teammates, Magusiak credits BC3’s success to Snyder, who molded a squad of three returning players – Bianco, Kelly Kabay, a hitter from Butler, and Rodgers – a sophomore and



Mackenzie Craig, right, a freshman on the Butler County Community College volleyball team, takes a shot against Cortney Harden, of the Community College of Beaver County, on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2017, in the finals of the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship. At center is BC3’s Brittney Bianco.

six freshmen into one that has won seven of its past eight matches and this weekend could capture its ninth NJCAA Region XX Division III championship.

“Rob pushes you really hard, but in a good way,” Magusiak said. “And that is what we need. They are hard practices every day.”

It’s Snyder, “definitely,” Craig said.

“He has taught all of us, not just as a team,” Craig said, “but individually the skills that we need in order to get it done and grow and get better as a team.”