

BC3's WPCC title streak hits 5 in volleyball, ties its conference record

Oct. 20, 2019



The Butler County Community College volleyball team won the program's fifth consecutive Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference title and 16th overall on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2019, by sweeping the Community College of Allegheny County. Front row, from left, Morgan Malinski, Makenzie McDowell, Madyson McAninch, Chyenne Ragle and Michaella Roth. Back row, from left, Jordyn Wyllie, assistant coach; Autumn Rodgers, assistant coach; Kaylee Ebbert; Abby Kopac; McKenna Dewitt; Olivia Hunt; Baylee Verner, assistant coach; and head coach Rob Snyder.

(Butler, PA) Abby Kopac had six kills in a decisive third set Saturday in which the Butler County Community College volleyball team thwarted a rally and won the program's fifth Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference championship in a row by sweeping the Community College of Allegheny County-Boyce in BC3's Field House.

BC3's fifth consecutive WPCC title, tying the conference mark it set in claiming crowns from 2002-2006, came by beating the Wild Cats 25-13, 25-14 and 25-17.

"This is good," said Pioneers coach Rob Snyder, selected Saturday as the WPCC's coach of the year for the 10th time in a 21-year BC3 career in which he has compiled a 392-151 record.

“On our first day, we always talk about our goal of winning championships and we work really hard to do it,” said Snyder, whose team moved to 16-3 Saturday with its 13th sweep of the season. “I push the players really hard and I expect a lot out of them. A lot of their time. A lot of their effort. And they give it to me. And this is their reward.



Four Butler County Community College volleyball players were selected Saturday to the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference all-conference team. From left, Madyson McAninch, a freshman libero from Freeport; Abby Kopac, a sophomore middle hitter from Knoch; Kaylee Ebbert, a sophomore outside hitter from Mars; and Makenzie McDowell, a sophomore outside hitter from Knoch. Pioneers coach Rob Snyder was named the WPCC’s coach of the year for the 10th time.

“I keep telling them it’s forever. No one can take that away from you now. Once you’re the champs, you’re always the champs.”

Eight programs other than BC3’s have won WPCC titles since the first championship in 1974. BC3 has been WPCC champs 16 times – eight more than No. 2 Penn State-Altoona, which last won the title in 1997.

“We need you to play hard”

Morgan Malinski, a freshman setter from Slippery Rock, had 30 assists for the Pioneers in the 2019 championship. Madyson McAninch, a freshman libero from Freeport who led players on all 100 National Junior College Athletic Association Division III squads with 7.44 digs per set entering the WPCC playoffs, had 27 digs.

Makenzie McDowell, a sophomore outside hitter from Knoch, had 10 kills – one more than did Kopac, who recorded four of her six in the third set after the Wild Cats took a 14-11 lead, their largest against the Pioneers on Saturday, prompting Snyder to call a time-out.

“Rob said, ‘We need you. We need you to play hard,’” said Kopac, a sophomore middle hitter from Knoch. “It was just a drive to play hard. I just want to do what is best for the team. And if my kills could help that out, I would do it.”

Kopac’s kills helped out, McAninch said.

“She really stepped up,” McAninch said of Kopac. “We have a tendency to stoop lower when it gets to the third set, kind of relax. And with Abby stepping in, she knew that she had to be a big player and really put forth the effort. And she did. She came through with that.”

BC3 doesn't make mistakes, said CCAC-Boyce coach Scott Smithley, whose squad (11-4) appeared in the program's first WPCC championship game since winning the last of four crowns in 1993.

“It's a typical Rob team,” Smithley said of Snyder. “A lot of ball control. They don't make mistakes. They force you into errors.”

“They're very hard to beat”

Saturday marked the first time BC3 and CCAC-Boyce met for the title.

“They're very hard to beat because they place the ball well and they get everything,” CCAC-Boyce freshman outside hitter Abi Cmar said of the Pioneers. “So in a scramble, they're always picking stuff up. So it's hard to end a rally with them because they're always exactly where you hit the ball. They're there. It's like, ‘Darn.’”

Kaylee Ebbert, a sophomore outside hitter from Mars, McAninch, Kopac and McDowell were selected Saturday to the WPCC all-conference team, McDowell for the second season in a row.

Kopac led BC3 with 116 kills entering the WPCC tournament, Ebbert was second with 108 and McDowell third with 106. McAninch had 387 digs.

BC3 earned a berth in the WPCC championship by sweeping the University of Pittsburgh at Titusville in the semifinals 25-8, 25-16 and 25-14 behind Malinski's 32 assists, McAninch's 19 digs and Ebbert's 12 kills. The Panthers reached the semifinals against the Pioneers by beating the Community College of Beaver County (24-26) 25-20, 25-13 and 25-5 in the first round.

CCAC-Boyce reached the championship by beating Pennsylvania Highlands Community College 25-12, (24-26), 25-17 and 25-13 in the semifinals.

BC3 next weekend will pursue its fourth NJCAA Division III Region XX title in five years and 10th under Snyder in a five-team tournament that begins with quarterfinals at 6 p.m. Friday in BC3's Field House. Tournament teams in addition to BC3 are Howard Community College, Columbia, Md.; Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, Md.; CCAC-Boyce and Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Johnstown.