

# National titles on the court for local pair

By **HERB GARBUTT**  
Metroland West Media Group

Chelsea Briscoe and her Defensa teammates had been together for three years trying to win a national title. But in the moments after reaching their ultimate goal, there was only one thing on their minds.

"The first thing anyone said was, 'Our season is over,'" Briscoe said. "This is the end of playing together."

The 10 members of the Burlington-based volleyball team will go their own way next season—Briscoe will attend Ryerson University— but they gave themselves a season to remember by winning the Ontario championship and then taking the national title with a 25-21, 25-19 victory over the Bisons Volleyball Club. Defensa dropped just one set in its nine matches in Abbotsford, B.C., going the distance in its final match of pool play.

"There was a moment where everyone was kind of freaking out but we picked it up after that," the Georgetown District High School student said.

They came back to roll through the playoff rounds, with their toughest match coming against DRVC, a team Defensa had lost to three straight matches to before beating DRVC in the provincial final. Defensa defeated its rivals again at nationals, 26-24, 28-26.

Defensa coach Rob Fernley said his demanding practices were designed to help his players excel at the next level and Briscoe has always accepted the challenge.

"There's hardly any middle that gets up as high as her," he said. "She's a fantastic blocker and she's got the speed and ability to close the block. She's got great power, plays excellent defence. She's a complete player."

Not to be outdone, Defensa's under-16 team also claimed the national championship with help from Christ the King student Allyssah Fitterer, who was named to the tournament all-star team.

The two teams practised together throughout the season and Fitterer, who was a teammate of Briscoe's on the provincial under-17 team last year, said they couldn't help but be inspired by older clubmates.

"We saw how hard they worked," she said "They had that drive and that pushed us even more."

The under-16 team was also close to perfect at the national tournament. They lost only one set in its six matches in pool play but faced a do-or-die situation in the quarter-finals after dropping the opener 26-24. But they rallied for a 25-18 win to even the match and took the deciding game 15-8.

After sweeping the Durham Attack in the semi-finals, Defensa faced a rematch with London's Forest City, the team that beat them in the semifinals at the provincials. Defensa would turn the table at nationals, though, winning 25-18, 25-19.

Though she has a year of high school left, Fitterer has already verbally committed to Michigan State University. She says she is looking forward to that but certainly won't be taking things easy until she joins the Spartans.

"It's a high-calibre school so I want to make them proud and keep my goals high," she said. "They want to win championships and that's what I want."



**CHELSEA BRISCOE & ALLYSSAH FITTERER**

OMFL gridiron action

# Bantam Tide undefeated

The North Halton Crimson Tide had mixed results over the weekend as all three of its teams took on the Town of New Tecumseth Express in Ontario Minor Football League play.

In Tottenham, the bantam Tide improved to 4-0 this season with a 57-15 thrashing of the Express.

The junior Tide held a 13-0 halftime lead, but mental errors allowed for a TNT comeback and North Halton lost 22-19 to drop its record to 1-3.

On Sunday evening at Kiwanis Field, the visiting Express handed the short-staffed junior varsity Crimson Tide its first loss in three starts in a 41-6 rout.



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