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WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS! The McKenzie-Smith Mustang boys' volleyball squad whoops it up after winning the North-Halton elementary school Tier 1 final last Wednesday at Milton District High. In the foreground are fans Steph McKay, left, and Nathan Bowen. (Doug Harrison photo)

Lady Stang v-ball team fails to 3-peat

There was no three-peat in Mustangland at McKenzie-Smith following last Tuesday's girls' North-Halton elementary school Tier 2 volleyball championship.

The local ladies were unable to maintain consistent ball control against Sam Sherratt at Georgetown High and were subsequently unable to continue their ride as Tier 2 champs after wins in '92 and '93.

"We couldn't get our passes to the setters. We were getting stuff jammed into the net or having to chase the ball into the net," said disappointed Mustang coach Mark Turner on Thursday after the 2-1 (14-16, 15-12, 13-15) setback. "I hoped the girls (could three-peat), but they let it slip away."

In the deciding game that could have gone either way, Sam Sherratt just happened to get the final two points in a match that was even at

8-8 and later 13-13.

"In Game 1 we were ahead 10-6, but Sherratt picked it up, came back and beat us," said Turner, adding Sherratt beat his team 11-15, 13-15 three weeks ago.

The Stangs' No. 1 hitter in the final was Rebecca Austin, while Kristen Finley and Steph McKay took MVP honours. Turner also noted the effective blocking of Grade 7 player Lindsay Almand.

The Mustang coach was pleased with the team's effort this season.

"The girls held a sense of confidence and desire all season," Turner said, adding serving and blocking was the team's strength.

Season highlights included a silver medal at the Mustang Main Event, second at a regional event at Oakville-Trafalgar high school and a top 10 finish at the Provincial Cup volleyball finals.

Stang boys' v-ball team captures North-Halton title

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Normally, when McKenzie-Smith

Mustang coach Dave Walker sees an opposing volleyball team hit double digits before his squad, he

gets nervous.

But not much about last Wednesday's North-Halton boys Tier 1 final at Milton District high school was normal of a Stang squad — not the look of their confused defence in Game 2, their flat-footed play or their lack of chat in forcing a gut-wrenching third and deciding match.

Not much except the final minutes and the final outcome — a 16-14 verdict after a 15-7, 11-15 split against the rival and relentless Centennial Chargers of Georgetown before 50 loud onlookers.

After watching his players squander an early 3-1 lead, fall behind 10-8 and exhaust their second and final timeout, there wasn't much Walker could do but stew on the bench, hope for a break and pray his players were thinking of the *We Believe* team motto.

As quickly as they lost the zest to deliver the big point in Game 2 after reeling off 11 of the last 14 points in the opening game, a poised and determined Mustang

team that fashioned a 7-1 league record this year had returned.

With the score 10-10, Sandy Chapman — responsible for 8 of the Stangs' 15, Game 1 service points — put away two more to give his team enough momentum to overcome ties of 13-13 and 14-14 and bring home the school's first-ever Tier 1 boys title.

"The guys believed they could do it and came back and did it," said an almost tearful Walker after the 85-minute thriller. "They got here by hard work and determination and won by that same token."

Walker, whose team last year left the Tier 1 finale as finalists, said the team to first hit double digits in any given game usually goes on to win, especially when it involves such good teams like the Mustangs and Chargers.

"But the guys played with so much heart to come back and tie it (Game 3)," he said. "They knew they were the team to beat and they proved it."

After feeling each other out and relinquishing any lingering pre-game jitters by splitting the first eight points to start the night, a much stronger Stang serving squad — headed by Chapman — took over and quickly built a 9-4 lead that was soon extended to 14-7.

"Winning Game 1 was everything," explained Walker. "It gives you the emotional head-start on the other team. They (the Chargers) walked on the court to start Game 2 and looked defeated."

Or was it a ploy by the Chargers to get the Mustangs a little cocky?

If so, it worked. The Stangs looked frazzled by their emotionally-charged opponents who stormed out to 6-1 and 12-8 leads.

"We stopped communicating and moving our feet. We were dead in the water," admitted Walker, who hinted his players may have been over their heads after the margin of victory in Game 1. "The guys stopped doing the things that got them (to the final)."



I BELIEVE! Coach Dave Walker prays for a Mustang comeback in Game 2, but it didn't happen as the locals fell 15-11.



THE MYSTERY CONTINUES

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