

Arron Hnatiw and Devin Rattie had Holy Trinity blockers seeing double as they teamed up on a spike during Friday's Halton junior boys volleyball final. Holy Trinity took the title with a two-game victory. Photo by Herb Garbutt

Junior Rebels fall in Halton title game

The Georgetown Rebels avoided their trademark slow start but it was a letdown in the middle of Friday's Halton final that cost them.

The Rebels, vying for the first junior boys volleyball title since 1999, matched the Holy Trinity Titans point-for-point in the early going and looked to be gathering steam at the end but it wasn't enough to avoid a 25-18, 26-24 loss.

"I still don't think they've played their best volleyball and there was a sense of disappointment but they also knew the other team played better," said Georgetown coach Erin Reble.

The Rebels and Titans were tied 16-16 in the opening game when the Titans' combination of a powerful attack and outstanding blocking allowed them to take

See JUNIOR, pg. 19

Rebels dodge bullet to reach OFSAA

The Georgetown Rebels watched the serve come across the net knowing that if the ball hit the floor, their season was over. And they weren't about to let that happen.

The Rebels stared down match point four times Friday before rallying for a 21-25, 29-27, 15-7 over their arch-rivals, the Oakville-Trafalgar Red Devils, to defend their Halton title and advance to the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association (OFSAA) championships for the fifth time in six years.

"I think at game point we all had our doubts," said the Rebels' Scott Cavasin, "but we knew if we pulled together we could do it. Once we won (the second game) and got that momentum we just took it to them."

The match was similar to the Rebels' three-game semifinal victory over Holy Trinity, only this time the Rebels were pushed even closer to the brink.

"We haven't played inspired volleyball this week and we didn't today until it was almost too late," said Rebel coach Jonas Kaciulis.

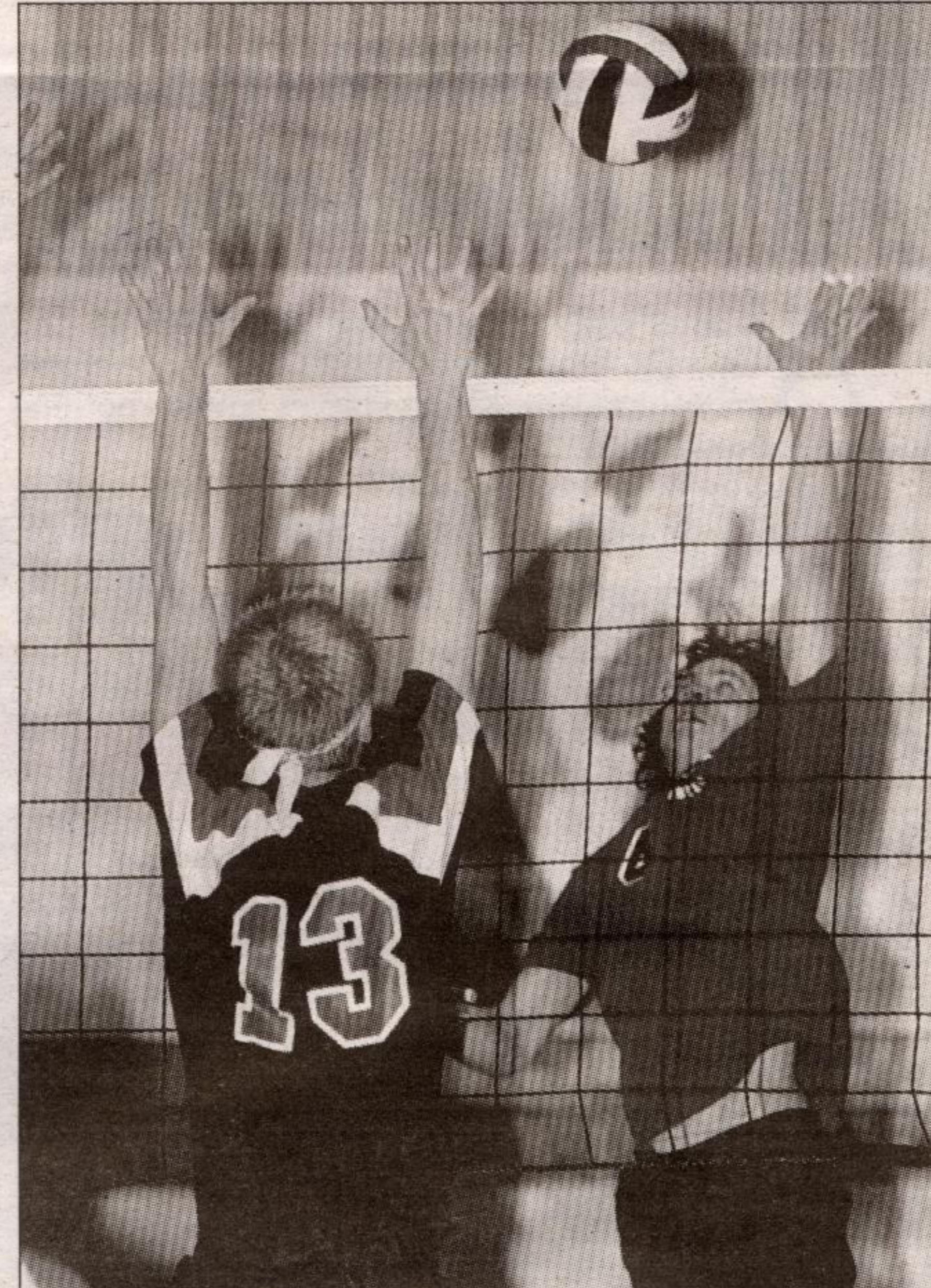
While the Rebels cruised through league play with an 8-0 record, they entered several tournaments to match themselves up against the province's best team. Throughout the year, they've inched closer to the top three teams including top-ranked Saunders, buoying their hopes for a medal at OFSAA. But Kaciulis was concerned about his players about looking too far ahead and forgetting they first had to qualify for OFSAA.

"Since the Saunders tournament, there's been a bit of a let down but that's behind us. Now it's let's move forward and go from here."

The Rebels are more than happy to have that chance because it didn't look promising in the early going Friday. They led only once (and that only lasted one point) in the opening game. And despite uncharacteristic poor serving that gift-wrapped five points for their opponents they were still in the game at 21-21. But OT's aggressive attack helped them take the final four points and the opening game.

The Rebels struggles continued in the second game as they fell behind 15-11. Georgetown finally started building some momentum and tied the game 16-16 when a bad call threatened to derail them. A Rebel spike deflected off an OT block and went out but the point went to the Devils. Kaciulis quickly called a timeout to settle his players and they responded by taking a 20-18 lead.

OT was not about to give in either. They fought back to take a 24-22 lead, giving them two chances to put the Rebels away. Georgetown saved their season by win-



Georgetown's Scott Cavasin hits the ball past an Oakville-Trafalgar block in Friday's Halton senior boys volleyball final. The Rebels rallied for a 21-25, 29-27, 15-7 victory to win the Halton title for the fourth time in six years. Photo by Herb Garbutt

ning the next two points and fought off two more match points before winning 29-27.

The deciding game saw the Rebels jump out to a quick 5-2 lead but OT cut the gap to one at 7-6. That's when the Rebels' determination really started to shine through.

Reid Hall almost ended up in the lobby after chasing down a stray pass between the bleachers. He managed to keep the ball in play and the Rebels won the point. That was part of a run that saw the Rebels take eight of nine points, including the last five—quite a feat for a team that hadn't strung together more than three consecutive points all match.

The game took on more significance when the teams learned before the game there would not be a Hamilton challenger for the Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference (GHAC) title. That cleared the path for the Halton champion to advance directly to OFSAA, which will be held Nov. 26-27 in Toronto.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



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