



VOLLEYBALL

Season in Review

The DBU Lady Patriot Volleyball Team completed one of the most successful seasons in team history in 2013, winning the Heartland Conference Tournament Championship and advancing to the NCAA Regional for the second time in team history.

Senior Cameron Hartson shined all season, earning numerous honors throughout the year, including Daktronics Third Team All-American, AVCA Honorable Mention All-American, and Heartland Conference Libero of the Year.

As for the team's performance, things started slowly, as the Lady Patriots went 1-3 in their opening tournament at Angelo State University. They quickly bounced back, however, winning three straight matches, including the beginning of their Heartland Conference schedule.

The most challenging stretch of the schedule came as DBU spent 13 of their next 15 matches on the road, spanning more than a month. The stretch included a demanding tournament at Arkansas-Fort Smith, before continuing conference play. Though the Lady Patriots came up empty at the tournament, they picked up seven wins overall, including six crucial conference matches.

Eight of the last nine matches were at DBU, with the Lady Patriots concluding their regular season schedule with a 5-3 Heartland stretch. The club finished at 12-6 in league play, good for the No.2 seed in the conference tournament, which determines the automatic bid to NCAA Tournament play.

Arkansas-Fort Smith earned the top seed and right to host the conference tournament with a 16-2 Heartland record, including a pair of hotly contested five-set wins over the Lady Patriots. The four-team bracket saw both UAFS and DBU

win their first round matchup, setting up a winner-take-all championship, Saturday, Nov. 23.

The Lady Patriots came out firing in the championship, taking the first two sets to stun the host-Lions. The home club showed plenty of fight, however, winning the next two frames, including a thrilling 29-27 fourth set, forcing a deciding final set.

UAFS fought back in the middle of the match, and DBU came alive in the final frame, dominating to the tune of a 15-8 win and the Heartland Conference Tournament Championship.

The win earned the Lady Patriots an automatic bid to the NCAA Division II South Central Regional Tournament, played in Canyon, Texas. DBU took on No.6-ranked West Texas A&M, and dropped a 3-0 decision in the regional opener.

"We are a team that follows Christ, and He got us here," said DBU Head Coach Cathy Kokel following the regional appearance. "The team's faith in Him, and relying on Him, is a huge part of our success."

Despite the regional loss, the Lady Patriots tied for their best performance since joining NCAA Division II, having also advanced to the regional in 2009.

"A lot of people don't know about us nationally," added Kokel, "and that motivates us. We'll be back here next year, and we will take care of business. Not a lot of people know about us and we're going to change that."

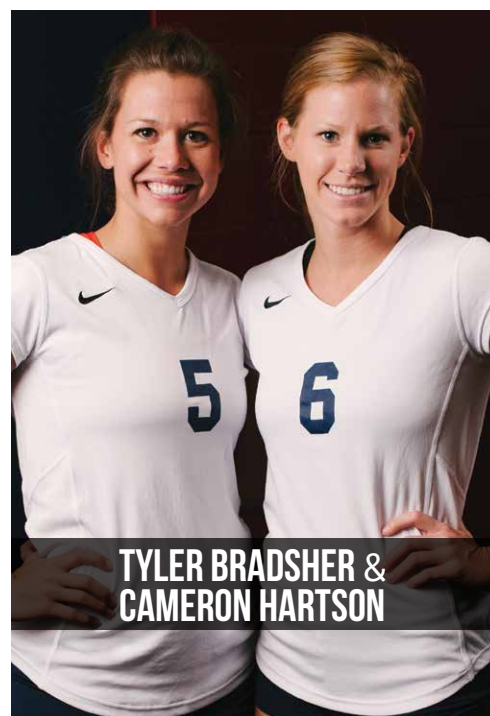
In addition to the All-American and Libero of the Year honors for Hartson, the senior was also named Daktronics and AVCA All-Region, Heartland All-Conference, as well as Heartland Libero of the Week three different times. Junior Tiara Iwegbu joined Hartson as All-Heartland

Conference, also named to the ASU Invitational All-Tournament Team, and Heartland Hitter of the Week on Sept. 16.

"Cameron (Hartson) is absolutely deserving of everything she has earned," said Kokel of her All-American. "This is a testimony to what hard work, dedication and determination can do for an athlete."

In addition to Hartson, Tyler Bradsher, Taylor Jones, and Kendall Sepanek are also graduating from DBU. "I'm proud of them, and I'm happy for them that they got this far," added the DBU coach. "Cameron and Ty (Bradsher) have been starters here for four years."

"The four seniors, with Kendall Sepanek and Taylor Jones, provided a lot of spiritual leadership and a lot of great personality. Having four seniors who will lead and a team that will follow is one of the reasons we got as far as we did."



TYLER BRADSHER & CAMERON HARTSON