

Toppers break Bees

Glass moves to 8-0 in Seminole District

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E.C. GLASS 3, BROOKVILLE 1

Inside: Box score. D2

Facing nearby Seminole District rival Brookville on E.C. Glass's auxiliary home court — where acoustics make even mild-mannered crowds seem loud — brought out the competitive edge in the Hilltoppers' volleyball team Monday night.

After sweeping the second-place Bees (11-2, 6-2 Seminole) last month on their home court, The Hive, the Hilltoppers (14-2, 8-0) took a commanding two-game lead in the district standings with their 26-24, 18-25, 25-17, 25-18 home triumph heading into tonight's match at Jefferson Forest.

"It's great to play an intense team such as Brookville," said Glass senior outside hitter Katherine George, who spiked 14 kills and served up a match-high six aces. "They are definitely great competi-

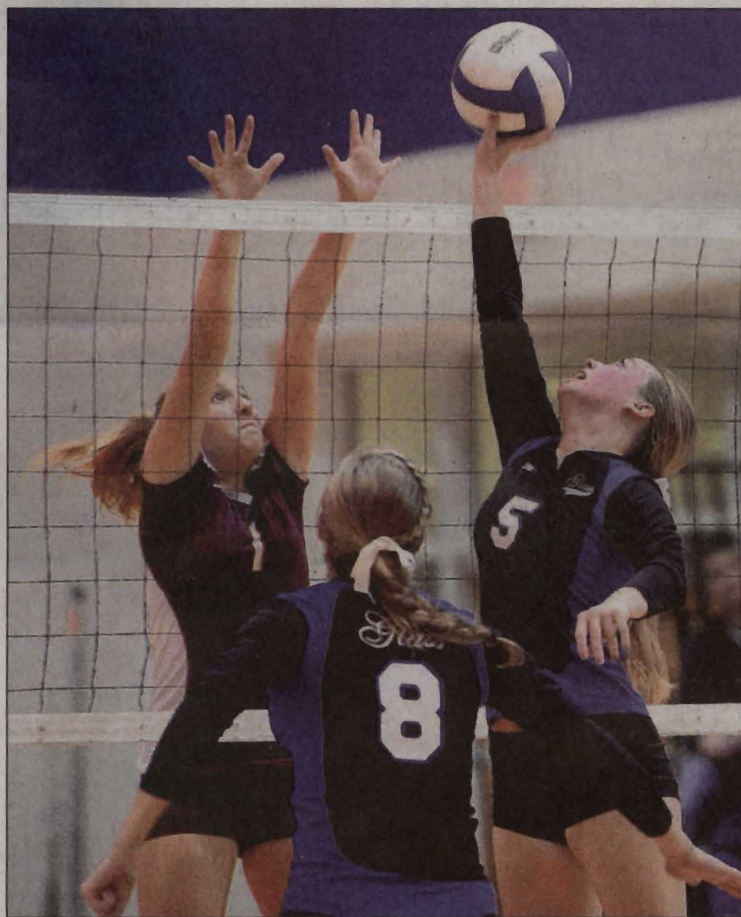
tion. I'm glad we pulled out the win. We'll probably see them again in the district tournament and maybe in regions, so we definitely need to keep it up."

"Playing them, we stepped up our game a little bit, kind of took care of business, and I was pleased to see that," Glass coach David Cardwell added. "We were at home and we don't like losing at home."

Though the Hilltoppers experienced a couple lapses on defense and communication breakdowns on offense, they rebounded from a second-game setback to win the last two fairly decisively.

"That happens," George

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E.C. Glass setter Paige Riley (5) tips the ball beside middle hitter Sarah Thomas (8) as Brookville's Lauren Swan (left) defends the net.

Glass

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said of the letdowns and indecisiveness that let the Bees erase an early deficit in Game 2 and move ahead 10-8 on a kill by Lauren Swan and 17-11 on a service ace by sophomore Kelsey Lester. "We get down on ourselves sometimes pretty easily, but we always pick it up the next game. We're always back on it and ready to win. We're really good with taking our momentum and going forward."

The match was originally scheduled for last Thursday, but due to deaths of former Glass secretary Jacquelyn Jones and special education teacher Suzette Quel last week, it was moved to Monday. The Hilltoppers dedicated the match to Jones and Quel — wife of assistant principal and head swim coach Rob Quel, who a few of the players swim for — and were glad to come out on the winning side in their honor.

"We really played our hearts out tonight, especially in memory of them," said Glass senior setter Paige Riley, who distributed 41 assists, made 16 digs and had five kills, all of the push-set variety, dumping the ball over the defense. "Our hitters did really well tonight, being able to put down balls. We were passing really well, so I got lucky on that. Everyone had a really good night tonight. We clicked as an offense."

Defensively, the Hilltoppers came up with two critical digs to help pad their lead and close out Game 3. **Cristina Good lunged for a spectacular backwards dig**

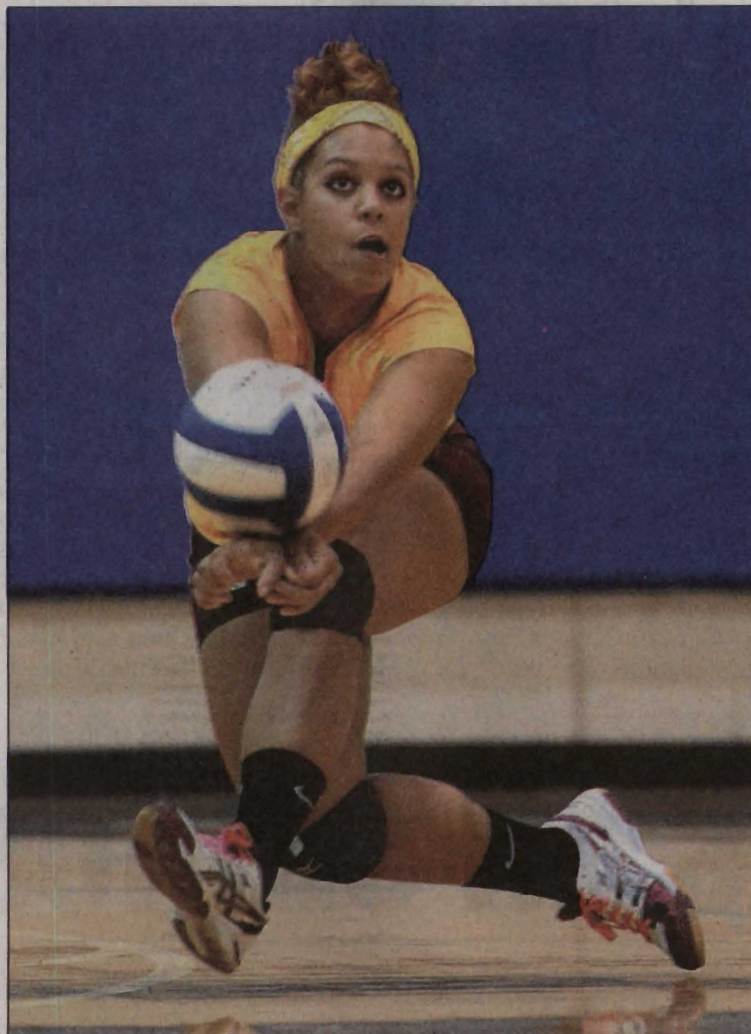


PHOTO BY LEE LUTHER JR.

Brookville's Morgan Bruce returns a serve against E.C. Glass on Monday.

save as she nearly crashed into the bleachers before Thomas one-timed a kill off the return for a 13-9 advantage. Moments later, libero Ali Johnson made one of her match-high 26 digs, coming up with a short ball near the right sideline that landed over the net in a hole in the middle for a winner, stretching the lead to 22-15.

Then, after Riley set up Good for a kill at the left side of the net, and Brookville libero Morgan Bruce dug up a spike by Good on the next play, Glass senior middle hitter Sarah Thomas — who tied Bees' outside hitter Jordan Pfau for the match-high with 15 kills — hit the game-winner that tipped the tape and rolled over

with topspin.

"They were picking up a lot and so were we and they were dumping and we tried to get it back at them so it was just a back-and-forth battle," said Brookville middle hitter Kaily Weiss, who had nine digs and three blocks to go with her eight kills. "We came out really hard and then in the end, we just didn't come back like how we started in the second game."

The Hilltoppers opened an early 8-3 lead in the fourth and final game on assists from Riley to Thomas and outside hitter Alysia Morris sandwiched around her service winner, followed by an angled stuff block by Cynthia Beasley. Riley later assisted Thomas with a short backwards set at the right side of the net for a kill on match point.

"They're a lot faster and quicker pace and we just couldn't get into that," Weiss said. "We could have probably done better [blocking] but we did give them a run for that. We had to work on closing the blocks so that our libero's not getting thrown all over the floor going after it."

Bees coach Ashley Wilson said setter Leah Porter (35 assists) wasn't able to get into her usual rhythm because of breakdowns in the passing department.

"Our passing struggled at times more than anything," she said. "Our girls did a pretty good job of taking advantage when they could. But our passing suffered, so we suffered. It's definitely something we can fix. It just stands out more against a team as powerful as them."