

Durango takes down Palo Verde

Trailblazers sweep Panthers in Sunset play

By ADAM CANDEE

REVIEW-JOURNAL

The fine print, as Durango coach Bob Kelly calls it, reads "Molten Select Leather".

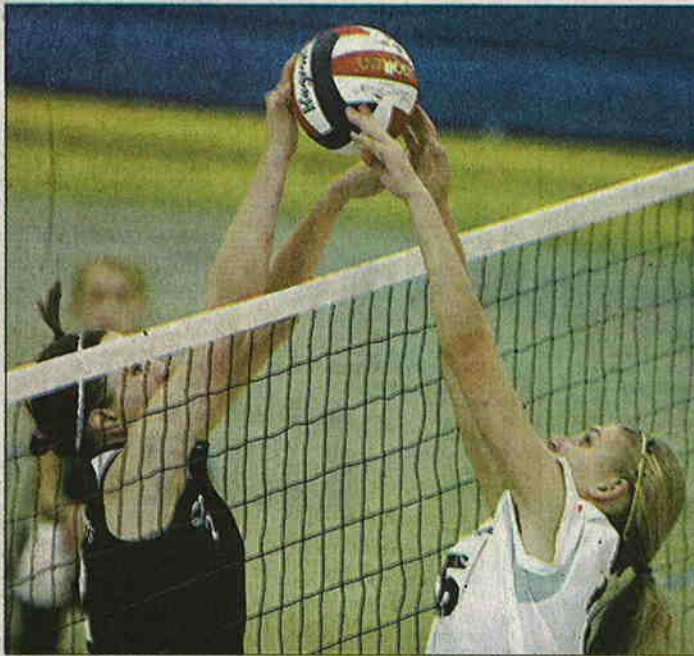
Kelly jokes that his Trailblazers hit the ball so softly that he can read those small words on the volleyball as it floats to the other side of the net. In Tuesday's Sunset Regional quarterfinals, though, the Blazers had more than enough power to advance.

PREP REGIONAL VOLLEYBALL

Durango, the third seed from the Southwest Division, scored a mild upset over Palo Verde, 25-12, 25-22, 25-17, at Canyon Springs High School. The Panthers (13-7, No. 2 Northwest), expected to be a contender in the tournament, never mounted an attack despite an edge in experience from last year's championship squad.

Putting out one of his youngest teams in years, Kelly does not always know what to expect from a team that features five sophomores in the regular rotation. Many of his players are still developing their games, and most are getting their first significant post-season experience.

"They're getting a good foundation right now," Kelly said. "They're relatively



RONDA CHURCHILL/REVIEW-JOURNAL

Palo Verde's Summer Kaimikaua, left, and Durango's Markelle Malone battle for a ball at the net during the Trailblazers' victory over the Panthers in a Sunset Region quarterfinal Tuesday night.

young. You can tell they're not quite physically developed."

Setter Markelle Malone, among the crew of sophomores, played a solid game, with 17 assists and five kills. Malone kept a number of Durango hitters involved in the attack, including middle blocker Melissa Kravetz, who led the team with nine kills.

Durango (12-7) powered through the first game and ran to a huge second-game lead before allowing the Panthers to tie it at 21. After closing out the second, the Blazers had no trouble dispatching Palo Verde for the sweep.

Durango faces Bishop Gorman in Thursday's semifinals.

■ **Cimarron-Memorial 3, Sierra**

Vista 0 — Sustaining momentum through a host of long scoring runs, the Spartans (13-5, No. 3 Northwest) upended the Lions (16-4, No. 2 Southwest), 25-18, 25-18, 25-20.

The match turned in the second game after Sierra Vista moved to leads of 6-0 and 12-6. The Lions appeared ready to get back into the match until Cimarron's tough hitting combination of Erynn and Janah Manumaleuna took over.

The Spartans won 16 of the next 19 points to take a 22-15 edge, and the Lions never recovered.

Cimarron faces Centennial in the semifinals.

Aurelia Houston led Cimarron with 11 kills. Janah

Manumaleuna had seven kills, and Aulii Andrade had 24 assists and three kills.

For Sierra Vista, Ailyssa Liddell paced the attack with eight kills, and Jessica Mojica recorded 18 assists.

■ **Bishop Gorman 3, Shadow Ridge 0** — The Southwest Division champion Gaels (17-1) wasted little time in advancing to Thursday's semifinal round with a 25-9, 25-20, 25-12 rout of the Mustangs (8-10, No. 4 Northwest).

The Gaels never faced a serious threat from Shadow Ridge. The Mustangs challenged briefly in the second game and grabbed a 12-10 lead, but Gorman stopped the upset bid there and continued its strong play.

Adie Foley had 20 kills and 13 digs, and Laura Hill had 34 assists. The Gorman attack got a huge spark in the middle from Candace Malone, who had 11 kills and four blocks.

Jeralynn Makaiwi had 24 assists for Shadow Ridge. Britanny Reyes had 10 kills and three blocks.

■ **Centennial 3, Spring Valley 0** — Displaying the form that took them to the Northwest Division title, the Bulldogs (14-4) made quick work of the feisty but undermanned Grizzlies (9-10, No. 4 Southwest), 25-10, 25-17, 25-11.

Centennial's balanced hitting kept Spring Valley off balance defensively. Krissy Kline and Melissa Kurtz both recorded six kills for Centennial, with Kline adding seven blocks and Kurtz contributing three aces.

Outside hitter Brenna Becker paced Spring Valley with nine kills.

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