By Ken Wunderley

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It's rare to find a high school girls volleyball team that features two hitters with 1,000-plus career kills and a setter with 3,000-plus career assists.

With that in mind, Clarion High School entered the PIAA Class 1A title match against Marian Catholic, held at Cumberland Valley High School, as a strong favorite.

The Bobcats lived up to their billing with a convincing 3-0 win over the Fillies to claim a second title for Clarion, and first since 2012.

"This title means everything," Clarion coach Shari Campbell said. "It's just amazing. This whole season has been minute-by-minute, detail-by-detail, managing it making sure that we get here. We have enjoyed every single thing we have accomplished, every ball that we have touched. We have been so full of gratitude for it. But, this is just everything. They have worked for it. It is so special."

Clarion (24-0), the District 9 champion, was making its fourth appearance in the finals and first since 2012. The Bobcats advanced to the finals with wins against District 6 champion West Shamokin, 3-0, in the quarterfinal; and Bishop Canevin, 3-0 in the semifinals.

"We train hard in the weight room, work hard to jump high, and work hard to be quick," Campbell said. "The training paid off."

Clarion's lineup featured two hitters who have 1,000-plus kills - senior outside hitter Erica Selfridge and junior outside hitter Korrin Burns. Selfridge, a transfer from New York, won her third state title.

"I played for Bainbridge-Guilford High School and we won two New York Class D state titles," Selfridge said. "We moved here because my sister (Abigail) is playing at Clarion University. It's very exciting to be a part of another state championship team."

Selfridge recorded 18 kills in the title match and finished the season with 224. Burns led the Bobcats with 19 kills and had 360 for the season.

"Erica is an explosive player, but I expected to be here without her," Campbell said. "We already had a talented team coming back, but adding another talented hitter certainly didn't hurt."

Clarion's lineup also featured Campbell's daughter Brenna, a senior setter who had 39 assists in the title match and finished the season with 689. She accumulated more than 3,000 assists in her career.

"It's been my dream for so many years," Brenna Campbell said. "To have this, it's amazing. It feels so great. It's is so awesome. It has been my life for 17 years. To finally go out this way is amazing."

Clarion recorded several errors to open the match, falling behind 5-0, but rebounded with eight aces and 12 kills to record a 25-16 win in the first set.

The Bobcats dominated the next two sets with wins of 25-14 and 25-15 to pull out the match victory. Burns capped the match with two kills to clinch the title.

"It is everything," said Burns, when asked what winning a state title meant to her. "It is everything we hoped for. It is really exciting. We have worked so hard to be here."

Burns is the third member of her family to win a PIAA title. Her mother Jodi won two titles at Norwin, in 1984 and 1986, and sister Ellie was a member of Clarion's 2012 championship team.

Marian Catholic (14-4), the District 11 champion, was making its seventh appearance in the finals and third in five years. The Fillies earned their title berth with wins against District 4 champion Canton, 3-0, in the quarterfinals; and District 1 champion Sacred Heart, 3-2.

"It was what we expected," Marian Catholic coach John Fallabel said. "They were 23-0 and had lost only one set all season. I've been there before with a team that was 22-0 and didn't lose a set."

Fallabel was referring to his 2013 squad.

"We did the best we could with the team we had," Fallabel said. "They are a great team. I give them all the respect they deserve. I always wanted to coach a match against Shari. It's been 10 years in the making and we finally matched up together. They were better than us. The better team won."

Fallabel was upbeat despite the loss.

"It was a fun match. It was the state championship. It can't be any better than that. We were the last two teams playing on the last day of the season. I'm very proud of my girls to get this far."