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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - Just after receiving his second gold medal, and first since 2015, Parkland boys volleyball coach Scott Trumbauer received an obvious question.

"Is this team better than the Parkland team that won in 2015?" this reporter asked.

"The similarities between this team and the 2015 team are scary," said Trumbauer, now in his 22nd season at the helm. "Just look at what the two teams have in common."

- * Both teams went undefeated – 24-0 in 2015 - 23-0 in 2023.

- * Both rosters consisted of mostly juniors. Both teams had approximately 80 percent juniors.

- * That meant both teams had a small senior class.

Trumbauer then turned to a member of his coaching staff, Sean Lewis, who was a senior on the 2015 team.

"Sean was the heart and soul of our team in 2015," Trumbauer said. "Now he's a member of our coaching staff."

Trumbauer also referred to two other similarities with the makeup of the roster.

"Our opposite on the 2015 team was a basketball player and the same is true this year. Both teams also had a left-handed setter."

The opponents were also similar.

"Fox Chapel was the WPIAL champion and had been ranked No. 1 in the state all year," Trumbauer said. "This time, we faced Shaler, another WPIAL champion that was ranked No. 1 in the state all year."

And lastly:

"Both teams also lost the same number of sets," Trumbauer said. "That's why it's so hard to differentiate between the two teams. This team would brag that they are the better team, and the 2015 team would say the same thing. Both teams are PIAA champs. That's all that matters."

Parkland, the District 3 champion, claimed the Class 3A title with a 3-0 sweep of Shaler in the second of two title matches held June 17 at Penn State University's Recreation Hall. Shaler, the WPIAL champion, was making its first appearance in a PIAA title match.

Parkland jumped out to an 8-3 lead in the first set and were not seriously challenged. The Trojans increased their lead to 14-8, with Shaler recording only three kills to that point, and finished with a 25-15 victory. Outside hitter Chase Robbins and middle hitter Luke Smith each had four kills for Parkland in the set.

"We had a lot of trouble getting our offense going," Shaler coach Paul Stadelman said. "Once we got in system, we did pretty well, but they had us out of system most of the match. They are a really good blocking team. Once they know where the ball is going, it's hard to beat that."

Parkland scored the first four points in set two and never trailed in a 25-18 victory. The Trojans' balanced offensive attack was even more evident, as five players recorded three or more kills in the set. Robbins led the way with five kills, Smith and middle hitter Brady Heyward each had four.

"They were spreading the ball around. They were passing extremely well, too," Stadelman said. "When you have to account for that many hitters, that left us with single blocks on all around. It's really hard for our defense to set up what we're used to. Their setter was able to draw us, one way or the other, when he was setting to hold and freeze our blocks. We were not used to seeing an offense similar to that. It was an adjustment for us."

Shaler (19-2) had some success on offense in third set, as it rallied from a six-point deficit to cut Parkland's lead to 15-12. From that point on the Trojans outscored the Titans 10-5, with six points coming on hitting errors, to register a 25-17 win and clinch the victory.

"It feels amazing that it comes in my senior year," said Robbins, one of two seniors on Parkland's roster. "I knew from that start of the season that this team was special and had the potential to win a state title. It feels so good to finally win."

Robbins led the Trojans with 16 kills, 12 digs, 2 blocks, and a 2.52 serve/receive rating.

"Chase is the heart and soul of this team," Trumbauer said. "It was only fitting that he got the final kill. Everyone in the gym knew it was going to him. The pressure has been on him all year. Everybody knew Chase was the go-to hitter in many situations, both in the front row and the back row. He came through for us huge in the back row today. He kept Shaler's defense constantly moving."

Robbins was one of five Trojan hitters who had 8 or more kills. Smith had 9 kills, 6 digs, and 3 blocks. Heyward had 8 kills and 3 blocks. Opposite Owen Rodgers had 8 kills and 4 blocks. Outside hitter Josh Nation had 8 kills, 11 digs, and 2 blocks.

"My goal throughout the playoffs was to have equal ball distribution," said setter William Stiles. "I tried to switch the flow and feed who is hot. I think I did a pretty good job of doing that today."

With all but one starter returning, Parkland is also looking forward to next year.

"Our underclassmen must step up and take over the leadership role that Chase provided," Trumbauer said. "Nothing is ever guaranteed in this sport, but our goal is to get back to the state finals."

Parkland earned its title berth with wins against: Cedar Crest, 3-0 in the first round; Upper Dublin, 3-0 in the quarterfinals; and Cumberland Valley, 3-1 in the semifinals.

"You have to hand it to Parkland," Shaler coach Paul Stadelman said. "They came out and were extra defensive, very scrappy, and worked extremely hard. They deserved to win today. They took it to us. Kudos to coach Trumbauer and his staff and his team for a great match. That was definitely the toughest match we had all season."

Shaler earned its title berth with wins against: Warwick, 3-0 in the first round; Canon-McMillan, 3-2 in the quarterfinals; and Central York, 3-0 in the semifinals. The Titans lose only one starter to graduation.

"It's hard to make it to the state championship game and come up short, but I'm proud of my guys," Stadelman said. "They had a great season. They worked extremely hard and were a great group to be around. With so many players coming back, getting back to the finals will be one of our goals, but it will not be an easy task."

Middle hitter Dante Palombo led the Titans with nine kills, while middle Logan Schimmel had six. Outside hitter Logan Peterson had five kills and 13 digs.