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Tapia-led Colts whip Centennial



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN -- South High School's Kenya Walker (right) works to get the ball past Centennial defender Shelby Schwer during the first game of their match Thursday at the Centennial gym.

South junior dominant along with her teammates in three-game romp.

By **TOM PURFIELD**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Like a healthy solar system, the planets seem properly aligned for the South High School volleyball team with a star shining brightly in the center.

Playing smoothly around dominant junior Megan Tapia, the Colts cruised to their eighth win in a row Thursday 25-22, 25-9, 25-14 over Centennial in a South-Central League game at the Bulldogs' gym. South remains atop the S-CL standings at 9-1 (11-3 overall), tied with Pueblo West.

While the 6-foot, incredibly athletic Tapia certainly controlled the action, her Colts teammates were far from playing second-fiddle. Sarah Housman, Kalli Kemling and Kayleigh Brown added plenty of power up front, while Kenya Walker and Ariel Buglewicz were solid in the back row.

"Megan's very talented, I just always try to communicate to them that they're a team and a team's

going to win," South coach Tiffany Shrewsbury said. "Sometimes the big hitters are not always going to have a good game, so everyone has to play."

That wasn't a problem against Centennial (2-8 S-CL and overall). After falling behind 8-3 in the first game, Shrewsbury called a time out for a little talk on mental readiness and consistency. After that, the Colts outslugged the 'Dogs for a tight first-game win and picked up steam from there. Leading 15-9 in the second game, Tapia scored on five consecutive blocks to mentally do in Centennial.

"One of our girls said 'we can't get by her.' That was the key part of the match because up to that point, we played them tough," Bulldogs coach Randy Kindschuh said. "Megan Tapia, she's a Division I volleyball player, and she's got some girls around her."

Tapia, who powers through the ball after hanging in the air at the net, fully displayed her all-around skills and knowledge of the game. She finished with nine kills but also scored on six dinks and nine blocks.

"It's all about placement. If I have two people up on me, I'm not going to power my way through when I can have an open spot," Tapia said about her split-second decisions to hit or dink. "Blocking is something I've tried to improve on, so it's nice to get (the five) blocks in a row."

Kemling added seven kills and Housman five to give the Bulldogs plenty to worry about other than Tapia. It's that type of support that has South flying high with a showdown against Pueblo West set for Oct. 14 at the Colts' gym.

"When we get down, it's because we're focusing on ourselves. When we play together and help each other out, that's why we're playing so well," Housman said. "Megan's awesome, but it's a team thing. It's not like a one-person team, but she definitely dominates."