

West Spikers are headed Downstate for "Elite Eight"

BY JOHN GILARDI

Hopefully, you can still get a hotel room reservation in Springfield for this weekend. For the third straight year, the Glenbard West Hilltoppers have qualified for the "Elite Eight" in the State Volleyball Tournament.

The finals will be held on this Friday and Saturday. Glenbard's first match is on Friday against Lane Tech, Public League champions, at 2 p.m. at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield.

Along with Mother McAuley, Springfield Sacred Heart, Collinsville, Palatine, Dixon, Lane Tech, and Oak Forest; Glenbard will be after their last goal of the season—to be the State Champion.

The Hilltoppers advanced to the "Elite Eight" by disposing of Lyons Township in the East Aurora Super Sectional, 15-4, 15-6. The Hilltoppers were in control right away with a 9-0 lead. The second game was no different.

The Spikers were ahead, 9-3, before the Lions could stop the offensive surge.

Lyons tried to come back but the defensive blocking of Nancy Reno and Nancy Brookhart stopped their momentum. Reno went on to finish off the match with her fifth "kill" of the night.

Jennifer AuBuchon led the way with seven kills, and two aces on four serves. She was also instrumental in the Sectional victory over Montini, 15-4, 15-7. Tallying three aces on 13 serves; she also had six kills as Glenbard took only 32 minutes to win in the final home match of the season.

"Tonight we did just what we wanted to do; win the two games," commented Coach Steve Burkhart after the Lyons victory. "We set the tempo right away, and we played very well."

For most of the seniors this will be their third trip down-state. As sophomores the team came in third, and as juniors they came in second. Even though it is their third time to the "Elite Eight,"

the seniors seem to be excited as the first time.

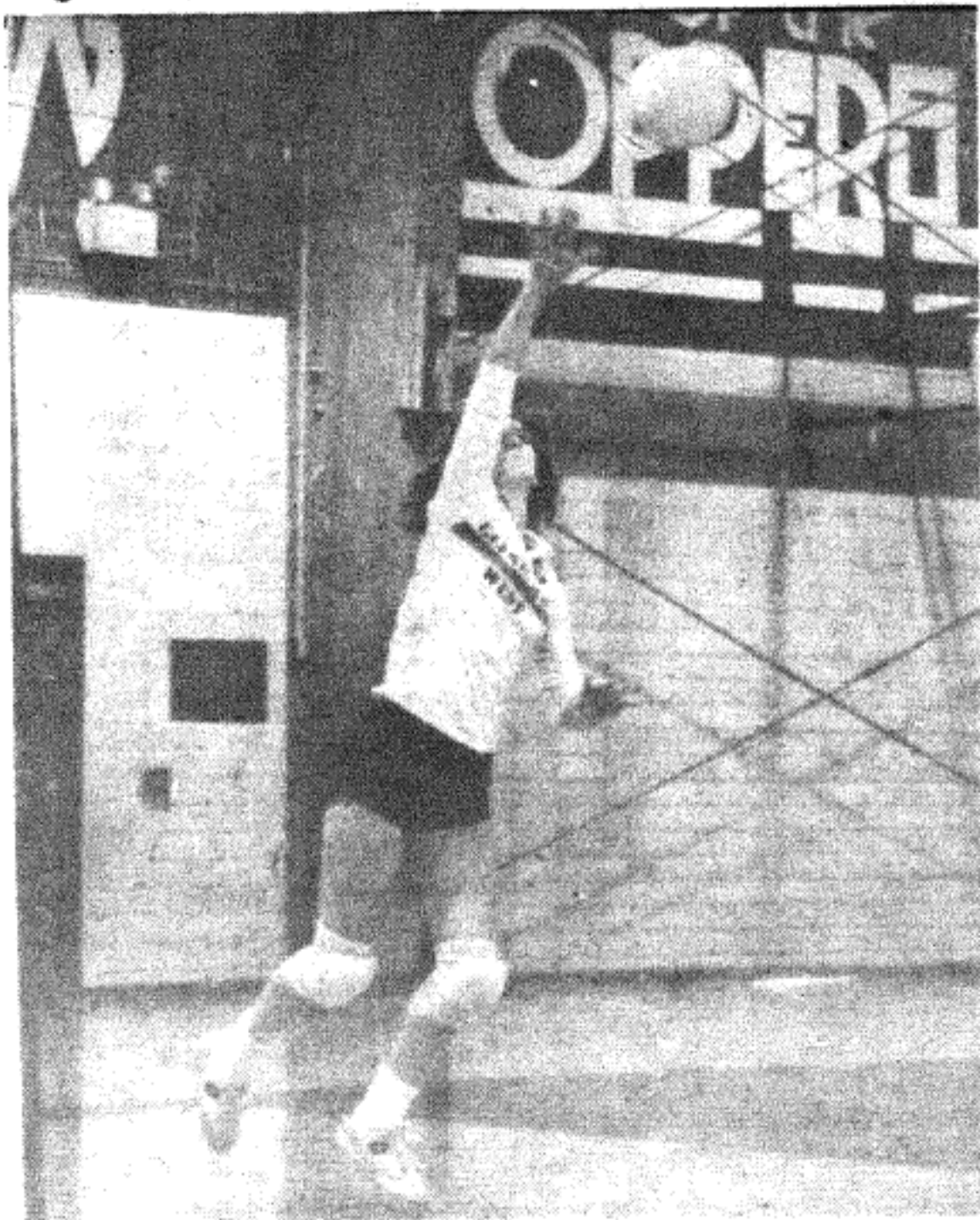
"There is always the thrill of going down-state," said Nancy Reno. "When you are a senior, this is it. We know what it is like. It is now or never."

In those two previous trips to Springfield, the Spikers have been blocked by Mother McAuley. They have stopped the Hilltoppers in the semi-finals and in the finals.

This year was the first season the Hilltoppers have defeated the "Mighty Macs" and they want another shot to play them again.

"Definitely we want to play McAuley again," added Reno, "but we will not look ahead. We learned our lesson at Maine West, and I feel that the loss was the best thing for us. It makes us work even harder."

So it will be "business as usual" for the Hilltoppers this week as they try to reach the one last goal for the season—to be State champions.



JUNIOR ABBEY Ripstra is shown serving for her Glenbard Hilltoppers in a recent volleyball match won by the Hilltoppers, who had 30-1 record this week.