By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

It's time for a test to see what they know.

That was Head Coach Jodie Schuller's comment as she talked about the Lady Longhorn volleyball team's season openers this week.

The action starts tonight (Thursday) when the Chase County C, JV and varsity teams travel to Haxtun, Colo., for action starting at 4 p.m.

Volleyball continues on Saturday for the varsity team as it plays three matches at the Lexington tournament.

"I can't believe it's here," Schuller said of the 2012 season's start.

"But, it's time. They're getting tired of practice."

Coach Schuller said her roster of 20 players has good team chemistry, and everyone gets along very well.

"They are a fun group to work with," she said.

She sees that as a real strength this season.

She said the squad will have more options in the hitting game this season, too, rather than depending on one or two strong hitters.

"We've got some good hitters, and our defense is getting better. We are learning to 'see' the game and read better," she added.

She said she doesn't like to talk about "weaknesses" on the team. Rather, she said, everyone has things they need to work on. The coaches will look at the stats each week and see where some emphasis is needed.

"We will always continue to stress serve and receive," she said.

Chase County will feature a 5-1 offense again this season in varsity play, using one setter, senior Bethany Sorensen.

Others expected to start at the varsity openers this week include sophomore MaKenna Ketter and junior Kristen Jussel, outside hitters; sophomore Paige Spady and sophomore Mindy Castle, middle blockers/hitters; and junior Kaycee Bubak, right side hitter.

Morgan Fisher, a senior, returns as starting libero.

Coach Schuller said subs that will see regular action include junior Bridget Langin, sophomores Makenna Wallin and Emma Bauerle.

SPVA tourney here this year

Chase County will host the SPVA tournament this year Oct. 11-13.

Last year, the Lady Longhorns finished third in the tourney, after a No. 1 seed, but five of the six teams last year finished differently than they were seeded.

Also, this week's opener at Haxtun is a day earlier than last year's Friday schedule. Schuller said she likes that change, because it gives them a day in between that and Saturday's tournament.

Chase County is competing in Class C1 again this year and will travel to North Platte High School for subdistricts the end of October.

The matches at Haxtun on Thursday kick off with the C games at 4 p.m., followed by JV and varsity. The varsity match is expected to start around 7 p.m.

Schuller said they have a tough first round draw at Lexington Saturday as they will face St. Paul in the opener. St. Paul has been the tourney champion several times.

That match will start 20 minutes after the conclusion of the Holdrege/McCook match, which starts at 10 a.m. CT.