By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

In one of their few appearances at home this season, Chase County is gearing up to host the SPVA Conference Tournament in Imperial this week.

The tournament, including the six SPVA teams, kicks off today (Thursday) with three matches and continues on Saturday, when the championship match is set for 5 p.m.

Chase County will play the first match of the tournament on Thursday at 3 p.m. against Perkins County.

The two teams 25 miles apart just played each other last Thursday when the Lady Longhorns came out on top.

However, Chase County Coach Jodie Schuller said she is not looking past the Lady Plainsmen.

“We are taking one game at a time,” she said.

Despite a No. 4 seed with their 13-10 record, Schuller said her team can get to the finals on Saturday if they play at their best.

“We have to want it. We’ll have to play our best,” she said.

North Platte St. Pat’s, 20-0 and one of just four undefeated teams in Nebraska (all classes), is the No. 1 seed.

Chase County also met up with the Lady Irish last week at a triangular Oct. 2 in North Platte. Schuller said St. Pat’s, with a pair of top-notch hitters, is a very good team, but “anyone can be beat.”

Sutherland, 13-5, is the No. 2 seed, followed by Hershey, 10-7, Chase County, Perkins County, 4-14, and Maxwell 7-15.

In action last week, Chase County was 1-2 with a win against Perkins County and losses to St. Pat’s and Southwest.

Following the SPVA tournament this week, the Lady Longhorns will be in Hershey Tuesday night for C, JV and varsity games starting at 4 p.m. MT.

St. Pat’s

Chase County forced the Lady Irish to three games, but lost the match by scores of 17-25, 25-20 and 18-25.

Schuller said they started slow the first game, but came back strong to win the second.

“That was a big boost for us,” she said.

In was a fairly competitive third game, but St. Pat’s pulled ahead and “we couldn’t put them away,” she said.

Schuller credited St. Pat’s as a good team with a pair of very good hitters. Their 20-0 record speaks of their talent.

Chase County had a .167 hitting efficiency, coming from 26 kills and 13 errors. MaKenna Ketter and Paige Spady led the offense with seven kills each, while Bridget Langin added six.

Schuller said Makenna Wallin was brought in as an outside hitter for this match and she moved Kristen Jussel to the libero position. She liked the combination.

Chase County was 56-62 from the line for 90 percent. Bethany Sorensen, who had 24 assists, also had the team's three ace serves.

Southwest

Next on the docket at last Tuesday's triangular was a match against Southwest, a 12-9 team as of early this week.

Schuller said her team had little left after the competitive match with St. Pat's and lost in two, 25-18 and 25-13.

"We gave everything to St. Pat's and couldn't get anything together," she said.

Southwest, too, was strong at the net with a .514 hitting efficiency on 23 kills and just four errors.

Chase County tallied 17 kills with 10 errors in the match, finishing with a .115 hitting efficiency. Ketter led the hitters with six kills, while Langin and Kaycee Bubak each had four.

The Lady Longhorns were perfect at the serving line, 30-30, where Emma Bauerle picked up Chase County's three aces. Sorensen was credited with 15 set assists.

Perkins County

Schuller said her team did a nice job against Perkins County, winning in straight sets, 25-18, 25-13 and 25-17.

"Our hitters looked good," she said.

Chase County put up 33 kills on nine errors for a .242 hitting efficiency. Ketter scored 11 kills in the match, while Langin added 10.

That was matched by a .088 hitting efficiency from Perkins County.

The Lady Longhorns were 66-72 from the line for 91 percent, where they also scored five ace serves, two each from Bauerle and Bubak.

Jussel had 27 digs and Morgan Fisher picked up 18, while Sorensen had 30 set assists.