

Athletes for athletes event draws crowd at volleyball game

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With every touch of the ball, the crowd's collective voice grew higher, with every new player, the excitement rose. Was it a game-winning, multiple-lateral play in football? The run-up for the last shot of a basketball game, perhaps? A triple play in Major League Baseball's playoffs?

No, actually, it was volleyball, as a packed house cheered on as the St. John Fisher College Cardinals (13-9) defeated the University of Rochester Yellowjackets (8-14) on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at the Manning & Napier Varsity Gym. Fisher won three of the four games during "Athletes for Athletes" night.

Calls to fill the gym had gone out, and, at least for the most part, they succeeded. The crowd was filled with athletes from a variety of sports. The three seniors being honored (Kayleigh Cassetta, Morgen Kandefer and Alyssa Ziobrowski) were cheered before the game by the packed house, and the cheers continued throughout the match.

The first game of the match was not a true taste of what was to come, as the Cardinals quickly squished the Yellowjackets, 25-15. The highlight of this first game was surely the long exchange of volleys that occurred while the game was scored 14-9 in favor of Fisher. Several fine saves were made by both teams until finally Kandefer ended it to extend the Cardinal lead.

Game two, however, was far different. After the U of R took an early 4-1 lead, the Cardinals scratched back to tie the game several times, at one point taking the lead 20-19 for their latest lead of the second game. The Yellowjackets stung back at the Cardinals, though, with a fury of points that ended with U of R's Katie Drinkwater getting the game point to bring U of R its first (and only) win of the match, by the score of 25-22.

Game three went deep. The two teams remained close for much of the game, with neither team being able to hold a lead for long. It went into the volleyball version of overtime, going well past the 25 points for each team to win, until finally the Cardinals won the game 31-29. With each possible game point, the stands drummed up support.

Game four was in many ways an anticlimactic end to the night, as the Cardinals, while never dominating like they did in the first game, were able to easily win, 25-20.

The fans and "athletes for athletes" that attended the game were numerous and very diverse. The feelings in the crowd were generally in favor of the "athletes for athletes" events.

Senior softball player Kristi Bradley said that it was "very supportive of all the athletes to come out to each other's games," adding that it "brings attendance up and allows the games to be a little more intense." She also added that having so many other athletes around during a softball game would make her want to play better to impress them.

Junior Andy Episcopo, a member of the football team, expressed similar sentiments.

"I think it's a great thing that the athletes of the school come out and support each other no matter what time of year. [It's great] that they can show that they care about everybody else's sport," Episcopo said.

And support they did. Although the crowd slowly thinned as the game went on, with maybe only two dozen of the original packed house student section remaining during the fourth game, they never ceased clapping and cheering for the fine play.

Fisher will next face St. Lawrence University on Oct. 11.