

## Cougars show growth despite sweep by Hagerstown

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Just two years ago, a night like Tuesday would have been hard to imagine for the [Frederick](#) Community College volleyball team.

Third-year head volleyball coach Breanne Hathaway came to FCC in 2007 with three players remaining on the roster, too late to recruit local talent to field a team.

Now in year three of its rebuilding phase, facing a nationally ranked squad, the Cougars hung with Hagerstown Community College before falling in three games, 25-17, 25-11, 25-22.

"Last year we did really well against them," Hagerstown coach Beth Domenico said. "(Breanne) has done a really nice job building that team and they have some nice hitters that really challenged our blockers. It was a nice surprise because we definitely need that."

Hathaway has built her program with local products. Eight of 10 FCC players are from [Frederick](#) County, four of whom played together last season at Catoclin High School. Against HCC, the Cougars leaders in kills, assists and digs were all local freshmen.

"I think it helps that we got so many girls from the [Frederick](#) County area," Hathaway said. "We have had some really good matches so far and we almost beat them in our last game this evening, and that's really going to say something about FCC."

Down 2-0, FCC (4-3) battled to stay alive in the final game.

Never trailing by more than three points, the Cougars jumped ahead 19-18 on an ace from sophomore Alex Abuerto.

HCC (7-0) answered to knot the game at 19-19 when Albanian freshman Klonarda Nezaj used her 6-foot-2 frame to tip the ball over the Cougars front line.

After falling behind briefly, FCC battled back again, tying the game at 22-22 when freshman Lauren Schoelen hit an ace that tied up defender Hailee Growden. But HCC regained the advantage when Schoelen's following serve sailed wide. Two points later, HCC sophomore Rebecca Morgan finished off the match with an ace inside the back line.

It was a fitting end for the HCC sophomore, who had dominated the first two sets with her aggressive offense. She wreaked havoc throughout the match, racing up the left side to show her power game with numerous kills.

"It is so exciting, the adrenaline rush is always there," Morgan said. "We try to even it out because we don't want all of the blockers to be just on me or another player. That way it makes it more open for us to get that kill."

NOTES: Sara Gartrell led the Cougars with six kills. Freshman Kersti Moore paced FCC with

nine assists and Schoelen led the club with three digs. FCC had won two consecutive matches, defeating CCBC Catonsville and Montgomery-Rockville on the road before facing HCC. The Cougars' next home game is Sept. 22 at 7 p.m. against Howard Community College.