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SCCS trio, Hank named All-CIF

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Cardinal seniors Gibson, Morrison and Eberlein honored in CIF-Southern Section Division V-AA

By Joey Gulino

Signal Staff Writer

jgulino@the-signal.com

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Four local players were honored on the All-CIF Southern Section volleyball teams, which were released earlier this week.

Three of the players hailed from Santa Clarita Christian, including senior outside hitter Kristina Gibson and senior middle blockers Kaley Morrison and Karla Eberlein. The only Foothill League honoree was Valencia junior middle blocker Katie Hank.

Gibson and Morrison were first-team selections in Division V, while Eberlein was a second-teamer. Hank made the second team in Division I.

Gibson was a first-team Heritage League selection finished the season with 251 kills, 146 digs, 29 blocks and 96 aces for the Cardinals, who went 19-11-1 and won the Heritage League championship before falling in the semifinals of the CIF-Southern Section Division V-AA Girls Volleyball Playoffs.

"I'm very excited about it," Gibson said. "We did work really hard. My teammates and I are just really happy for ourselves that we all made it. We deserved it."

Santa Clarita Christian head coach Darcy Brown agreed.

"She was probably our most consistent player," Brown said of Gibson. "She's not a real tall girl, so many people may not have seen her as the threat she actually was. She could put it away, she was a good passer and had a really good serve."

Morrison was named Heritage League Most Valuable Player and finished the season with 222 kills, 133 digs, 160 blocks and 68 aces despite being the focal point of opposing game plans.

"She's got a great swing and a very hard hit," Brown said. "She had a really powerful serve that could do some damage as well. She's just a very strong player."

Morrison said that the friendship she shares with Gibson and Eberlein made the honor more special.

"We love each other and we work really well together," she said. "There's a lot of camaraderie on our team, and it's easy to work together on the court."

A first-team Heritage League selection, Eberlein wound up with 144 kills, 104 digs and 170 blocks to go along with 25 aces. Brown noted that Eberlein hit her stride when it counted most.

"She led us in blocking this year, and she was a great all-around player," Brown said. "The second half of the season, she really kicked it into high gear. It was a huge asset for us to have her. She just became a force to be reckoned with."

And the Cardinals became a force to be reckoned with thanks to the trio of Gibson, Morrison and Eberlein.

"It's a team effort, but the combination of those three is what led us to the semifinals," Brown said.

Hank was one of the big reasons Valencia won its seventh straight Foothill League crown this past season. Her 257 kills ranked second on the team, and she also added 38 aces as the Vikings advanced to the CIF-Southern Section Division I-A quarterfinals.

"I didn't really expect it," Hank said. "I'm very honored. I wouldn't have made it without my teammates and coaches pushing me."

Valencia head coach Ray Sanchez praised Hank's offensive capabilities.

"I think her biggest contributions were on the offensive side of the ball, attacking the net and from the service line," said Valencia head coach Ray Sanchez.

Fortunately for Sanchez, she'll be back next fall.

"I'm definitely not the loudest one, but I kind of set the example for the youngest players and try to lead and set a good example," Hank said.

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