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TRINITY - The word "dynasty" is sometimes overused in sports.

But when it comes to volleyball in the Piedmont Athletic Conference, Wheatmore High School has established a dynasty.

In fact, it wouldn't be wrong to look at the Warriors in the overall state 2-A title picture and use that "D" word. The Warriors may be looking for that first-ever state championship, but it would be hard to find a team anywhere in the state that has tasted as much success as the Warriors have enjoyed over the past eight seasons.

Wheatmore, the top-seeded team in this year's NCHSAA East Regional, will look for a trip to the state 2-A championship when the 27-2 Warriors host No. 3 Ayden-Grifton Tuesday in the East Regional championship match, the third time in the past four seasons the Warriors have played for a regional title. The match is set to begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Warriors defeated Ayden-Grifton in a thrilling five-set match last season in the fourth round of the state tournament. This year's meeting comes one round later. Should the Warriors win the East Regional title, the state championship match is set for 7:30 p.m. on Saturday at Fayetteville State. Foard and Brevard will play for the West Regional title Tuesday night.

"I don't know, I really don't use that word," WHS coach Sarah Beth Campbell said of calling her program a dynasty. "We just want to have good years and a good program."



Coach Campbell addresses her team during the win over Clinton High School on November 2nd.

The Warriors have that. WHS has dominated PAC play as this year's 12-0 record marked another season Wheatmore has finished the league season unbeaten.

"(Previous WHS coach) Rodney Kirby laid the groundwork for such a good program, it was under his leadership that got the ball rolling," said Campbell, who is in her fourth year at the helm. "For me coming in, I felt a ton of pressure on me to keep it going. The girls all know the expectations and they don't want to be the first team to lose a conference game. That's the motivation."

The Warriors will be looking to continue an impressive streak Tuesday against 21-5 and third-seeded Ayden-Grifton. Since a 3-1 loss to Southwestern Randolph High School on Oct. 5, Wheatmore has not only captured 12 straight matches, but it won all those matches by sweeps. That's 36 straight sets won as the Warriors have been victorious in 84 of 94 sets played this season. The only other loss the Warriors suffered this year was a 3-2 setback to Northwest Guilford after starting the season with seven wins.

"We have lots of energy right now," Campbell said. "We are back in the same spot we were in last year and we are out to make it over that hump that we weren't quite able to get over last year. We worked hard to get the home court advantage and the girls know what they have to do to get us back."



Wheatmore's home stands were nearing capacity in the fourth round win over Clinton High School.

Last season, the Warriors advanced to the regional finals before being eliminated by Currituck County, which went on to win the state 2-A title.

After rolling to the PAC regular season and tournament championships, the Warriors have swept past No. 32 Richlands 25-14, 25-9, 25-6, topped 16th-seeded South Columbus 25-8, 25-15, 25-17, rolled past No. 9 Whiteville 25-7, 25-21, 25-18 and dusted off No. 4 Clinton 25-17, 25-21, 25-16.

This is certainly familiar territory for the Warriors, who are a combined 105-9 under Campbell entering Tuesday's contests.

"We have great senior leadership," Campbell said, pointing to Hope Turbyfill and Kaleigh Craft among others. "Most of the girls in the senior class are natural leaders."

Campbell said she is happy with where her team is as they shoot for a chance to play for a state title.

"There are things we are doing now that we weren't doing at the beginning of the season," Campbell said. "We still have some errors in there, but they are mental. Athletically, we can do it. It all comes down to the mental game."