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Very little has been the same this year when it comes to high school volleyball in Randolph County. There's a vast difference in the number of matches a team can play, there's a big difference in the number of fans that can watch a team play and players have never had to wear masks while playing before this year's pandemic.

However, there has been one constant in Randolph County volleyball. No matter the number of matches played, no matter how many fans are in the stands and mask or no mask, the Wheatmore High School varsity volleyball team is going to be hard to beat.

The Warriors, who have become one of the top-rated programs in the state, are at it once again as WHS owns a perfect 5-0 mark, 4-0 inside the conference.

While teams haven't been able to stop the Warriors this season, the coronavirus has as the team is currently in lockdown due to a player testing positive.

"It is out of our control, I told them (before the season) that this was probably going to happen at some time," WHS coach Sarah Beth Campbell said. "We got in our Senior Night and some matches and I am praying we are going to be able to play some more."

WHS players can not resume practicing until Thursday, Dec. 17. With the next day being a half-day of school, no one is sure if any athletic teams will be able to practice that day. WHS is scheduled to play three games the following week, Dec. 21 against Providence Grove, Dec. 22 against Jordan-Matthews and Dec. 23 against Eastern Randolph. Campbell said the team will have three games per week until the regular season comes to an end.

"I was talking to (Trinity High School volleyball coach Rodney Kirby) and we were saying this is like playing Frogger or Tetris every day and we were on our second life," Campbell said. "We have never had this before, never had to deal with something like this."

The Warriors were cruising in the PAC when their season was halted, losing just one set the entire season, that coming to Randleman in the season opener. WHS, Campbell said, had made the necessary adjustments to keep a most impressive streak alive - the Warriors have played in three of the last four regional championships.

"I feel overall they have done pretty well adjusting to everything," Campbell said. "We were able to practice two days in masks before our first match and like for most, it was a communication thing. It muffled our sound so we had to be louder. They were winded a little more. We had to stop some sets, whether it was our team or the other team, to catch their breath."

Senior Kelly Williams said the Warriors, like all teams, had to make adjustments.

"Masks were a problem from the start," Williams said. "We all got so hot. We couldn't be very loud. It was hard to get adapted to all the requirements."

But the Warriors, did, and they learned how to play without the usual amount of fans in the stands.

"We remind everyone that yelling is important, that we need to come in and celebrate every point," Williams said. "We have to show enthusiasm, create enthusiasm."

That has been difficult, Campbell admits.

"That's been our biggest hurdle," Campbell said. "We're so used to loud fans and lots of fans. Not having that is so weird. It's not like our parents aren't cheering. The girls have been motivated by the crowd and not having that is a challenge."

Now the Warriors have another challenge to battle. They will rely on zoom meetings and solo workouts until they can get together once again.

"It's going to be a mental thing, really," Williams said. "If we want to win, we have to keep expectations up and remember how it is to win. If we want to win, then we are going to have to put the effort in at home. It has to be what you want for yourself and your team."

"If they keep the end-goal in mind, we will be okay," Campbell said.

No doubt, the Warriors will do exactly that.