

2013 Defensive Dandies Part II: Gym Dandies

Written by John Tawa (Prep Volleyball)

Wednesday, 05 June 2013

If they are pure defenders and can dig it up, they're on this list (provided the coach nominated them, of course)

This is Part II of our Defensive Dandies recognition. Part I, our "Dandy Lions," was published last week.

These players, known as "Gym Dandies," are full time back row players, both high school and club, who work their butts off during practice and play to help the team at all costs.

The Gym Dandies list is presented in 12 teams of 13 (because everyone wants to be on a team), with everyone else (about 100 more) receiving Honorable Mention recognition. The designation is largely subjective, I'll admit, because it's much more difficult to determine who is the absolute best in the back row than, say, an outside hitter, whose height, jumping ability and power provide discriminating measuring sticks. I gave deference to seniors and to those players whom college coaches have determined are the best of the best in the backcourt.

High school coaches and club directors were asked to nominate players for this list. The only limitation was the player had to be generally considered among the best 10 defensive players in her state regardless of class year or school classification. That is obviously a subjective standard. Some coaches tried to abide by our "marching orders" strictly and did not nominate excellent players. Others nominated more freely.

For the record, I did not cut anyone nominated who logged significant varsity minutes in 2012. If a coach thought enough of a player to nominate her, who am I to say she doesn't deserve recognition? That's why every player on this list has a narrative attached to her. These are real players who love the game and play their guts out. They are deserving of the recognition they're getting here and more.

That being said, you must understand one final thing before we get to the list: I did not want to make any assumptions about players who SHOULD be on this list. Thus, with very few exceptions (players I knew to be standouts), only nominated players were considered. Also, if you were injured most of the season, you did not make this list. Moreover, making the list last year did not guarantee your inclusion in 2012 unless someone took the time to nominate you. I have no doubt that there are dozens of players out there with the stats, skills and accolades to have a place on this list. Alas, given that more than 3,000 high school coaches and the same number of club directors received my request for input for this list and it was also posted on the girls' volleyball message board, one can only do so much.

Finally, I am indebted to Mike Miazga for helping me write many of the narratives.

Congratulations to everyone for making the Gym Dandies!

Honorable Mention

Alex Silver, Jr., Coppell (Texas) – Always in the right place, Silver contributed 534 digs in 2012 for the state-champion Cowgirls. She earned First Team All-District honors. "It is incredibly frustrating to be a hitter on the other side of the net from her," noted Coach Julie Green.