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## Acalanes Volleyball's Sister Sets

By Lou Fancher



(Left) top: Dory Grobeck, bottom: Danielle Grobeck;  
 (Middle) top: Claire Amaral, bottom: Julia Amaral  
 (Right) top: Molly Dalziel, bottom: Megan Dalziel  
 Photo Ohlen Alexander

The Acalanes High School Girls volleyball teams are introducing a new, strategic element to the game: sister sets.

This year, for the first time during varsity head coach Steve Siegmann's tenure at the school, there are three sets of sisters amidst the freshman, junior varsity and varsity teams.

"This is my fourth year at Acalanes and if I remember correctly, we have not had even one set of sisters in the program, much less the three we have this year," he said.

His 2011 rosters includes Julia, 16, and Claire Amaral, 14; Megan, 17, and Molly Dalziel, 14; and Danielle, 17, and Dory Grobeck, 14.

Siegmann watched the sister-pairs work together during joint practices this summer. He saw three special bonds and liked how they have continued to encourage each other during the fall season games.

"The really cool thing about all three sets of sisters is that they are all very hard working players," Siegmann said, "the older girls want to set an example for the younger ones to follow and the younger ones really look up to their older sisters."

While there's a commonality to their connections, Siegmann described each set differently. The Dalziels are assertive, with unique

arm swings. The Amarals are "quirky," energetic, and active on the court. The Grobecks are technical in all aspects of the game.

Sitting down with the six players, it was obvious that they mean business. There are no chatty asides and every question was examined for the best angle, as if preparing to spike the answer.

"She helps me on my mental game. She tells me to brush off mistakes. I look for her approval," said Claire Amaral, about the best advice Julia has given her.

Julia, answering the same question, said her younger sister's advice has come in the form of a protest: "'Don't ruin it for me!' because I always tell her everything because I've been through it already."

The Grobecks demonstrate Siegmann's description of them as technical players and share practical advice with each other. Both girls provide a list of examples: "Keep an elbow back," "do a swing instead of a roll shot," and "get homework done earlier."

"I pretend that I don't take the advice, but I do," admitted Danielle.

The younger sisters have to think hard to name something they would change about their siblings.

"On the court, I really like how she always tries her hardest," Dory confided.

"We're really close, but sometimes she gets annoyed," said Molly Dalziel.

Their varsity counterparts speak mostly of wanting their younger sisters to have more self-confidence.

"I wish that she was fully confident in who she is. That she just loved herself," said Claire, capturing the essence of their answers.

The six athletes said that playing volleyball is hectic, but rewarding. For incoming freshman, the team provides an immediate social circle.

"This is a family, not a team," Megan explained. "We're each other's biggest support systems."

"Here, we're really accepting. You put it off: we don't judge," Danielle stated.

The older girls' favorite moments, beyond sharing the sport with a sibling, included select serves with lots of top spin, holding up against tough opposing teams, and receiving recognition for leadership.

Megan remembers last season's final league game as a high point.

"There was so much pressure, but we clicked as a team and had so much fire and intensity," she said.

It is impossible to predict if the familial relationships will translate into increased focus and leadership for the Varsity girls, or improved ball control issues for the junior varsity team-stated goals for Siegmann and assistant coach Jessica Moore-but there is one thing that is certain: winning at Acalanes will include three, tightly-honed Sister Sets.

Check out the sisters in action tomorrow, Thursday, September 29 when Acalanes hosts Alhambra; freshman play at 4:00 p.m., junior varsity at 5:00 p.m. and varsity at 6:30 p.m.

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