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**Voyzey's Vikings ready for run in sectionals**

By Ryan Nagelhout Niagara Gazette

BUFFALO — Surrounded by underclassmen, Jon Voyzey stands out on the floor for Grand Island.

Both in ability and stature, the senior outside hitter has led a young Vikings volleyball team that's poised to make a run at a Section VI Class B title.

"Voyzey has taken over as one of the better hitters right now. On the left side he's the most consistent, he filled in the role of Jon Oyer, who we've missed," Schultz said. "He's there putting the ball away so it's good to see him step up a little bit."

The Vikings graduated a number of starters from last season's Niagara Frontier League title-winning squad, including Oyer, Tyler Hinaman and Alex Killian. Despite the losses and a wealth of young starters on the floor, they managed to repeat as NFL champs and get the No. 1 seed in the Class B playoffs.

"He was on the left side opposite of Jon (Oyer) but he wasn't as much of a threat as he is this year," Schultz said. "Now they have to keep an eye on him and try to block him."

Grand Island will face No. 8 Maryvale at home at 6 p.m. tonight in a Class B quarterfinal. The Vikings hope to take care of business and get a rematch against No. 4 Hamburg, who beat Grand Island in the semifinals last season.

A chance at a rematch wasn't on the radar for Vikings coach Bill Schultz in August.

"At the beginning of the year I didn't expect that at all," Schultz said. "We've shown at times that we're young, but I'm happy with the No. 1 seed. It helps. I'm sure all the ECIC schools are pretty (ticked off) about it but that's the way it goes."

Voyzey said being underrated is nothing new for the Vikings.

"Last year was kind of like that, too," Voyzey said. "No one ever thought we could win the league."

Juniors Adam Heftka and Corey Adamshick have stepped in to set for Grand Island, but Voyzey's evolution into a big gun on the outside has been key for the Vikings offense.

"I've gotten after him, telling him 'You're a senior, it's your time to shine,'" Schultz said. "He's a good leader, too. He tries to get the guys going and leads by example."

Voyzey said his role on the team is to simply calm some of the younger players down in big moments.

“Whether they’re late coming up to hit or not passing well, I try to relax them,” Voyzey said. “When I was on JV I saw some really, really good players come through and a lot of success.”

Voyzey, a two-year varsity starter, said he feels his team hopes to live up to those Vikings teams of the past. His coach thinks they have a good shot this season.

“This team, they’re really smart kids, their work ethic has been great,” Schultz said. “I think they see what they can do and they’re just hoping they can put it all together in those big games.”