

Lincoln-Liberty Middle School volleyball matchup always strong rivalry

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
February 26 2015 6:27 AM



When Liberty and Lincoln Middle School gets together in volleyball, it is always a competitive match, but when the girls walk off the court, they shake hands and become close to one another again.

When the two teams merge on to one team in Edwardsville High School, they become bound together for four years.

Wednesday afternoon, the two schools met once again for a regular season match and excitement did flow through to the large crowd in attendance at Lincoln. Lincoln won the eighth grade match in two sets, but it again was close. Liberty won the seventh grade match in three sets.

Liberty Middle School volleyball coach Katie Bevis-O'Neal said her girls always get excited about the matchup.

"The girls are competitive with each other, but they come together at the end, side by side in orange and black at the high school," she said.

Bevis-O'Neal came up through the Edwardsville system and she said working in the Edwardsville District 7 students has a special place in heart.

"This place gave so much to me and I try to help the kids become much more than only volleyball players," she said.

[Liberty-Lincoln Middle School Volleyball - Feb. 25 Photo Gallery](#)

Bevis and Lincoln Middle School coach Jami Parker seem right at home with their kids, guiding and inspiring them.

Parker said the game is a big rivalry with "a lot of emotion."

"These are the biggest matches of the year," she said.

Lincoln and Liberty Middle Athletic Director Ryan Ketchum agreed that the matches between the two schools are always close.

"The kids all know each other because they face each other so many times in the season," Ketchum said. "They are fierce competitors on the floor, but when it is over, they are friends."

Liberty hosts the seventh grade regional championship matches next week. Liberty plays Cahokia at 4:15 p.m. Tuesday, followed by Lincoln vs. East St. Louis Clark. The two winners meet at 4:30 Tuesday.

