

Volleyball cross-town raising funds for cancer research

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Downers Grove Reporter
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Downers Grove, IL -

Woodridge resident Casey Patton said she loved competing with her varsity volleyball team in the Downers Grove cross-town game.

When she played with Downers Grove South High School's team against Downers Grove North as a sophomore, the gymnasium was packed for a highly competitive game between girls who knew their opponents and rival coaches wanting to show off their best. The game also brings in students from local middle schools looking forward to the future and recent alumni, making for a crowd of about 1,000 at last year's event.

While she won't be on the court this year, Casey is on the minds of all her friends and former teammates. They will be wearing T-shirts she and her mother designed instead of their regular uniforms to support Be The Cure, a charity Casey helped create after she was diagnosed with a brain tumor last year.

Casey said her experience showed her how little people think about children's cancer while introducing her to many others who have similar problems. She originally set out to raise \$3,500 for Children's Memorial Hospital by selling T-shirts. That goal was reached — and easily surpassed — after receiving \$13,000 between donations and selling nearly 1,000 shirts.

"This Be The Cure thing really raises my spirits because I know directly where it's going," she said. "I know the kids and I'm one of them."

The idea to dedicate Wednesday's event to Casey, who is now a senior, came from Downers South volleyball coach Colleen Reagan. Half of the entrance fees to the game will go to Be The Cure as will half the proceeds from a split the pot raffle. The T-shirts also will be on sale.

"Casey's got friends on the north side of town who are supporting the cause, and we know (the game) will bring in a lot of people," Reagan said. "We hope that people who didn't know about Be the Cure will learn about it and support the cause as well."

Support from her former teammates and friends has been key to Casey as she goes through treatment leaving her too tired to attend full days of school or go out regularly.

"It's really a daily struggle to kind of maintain some normalcy in my life, especially my social life with my friends," she said. "But I have a group of really great friends, and they come over here and visit all the time."

On Thursday, Casey will get the latest update on the status of her tumor through an MRI. Her first one in February showed it had shrunk 25 percent. While there was no size change by May, it appeared less aggressive, she added.

"It's almost like all of this has been building up, and I'm hoping it will be good karma," she said.

If you go

What: *Downers Grove North and South High Schools Volleyball crosstown game*

When: *5 p.m. Wednesday*

Where: *Downers Grove South High School, 1436 Norfolk St.*