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Indians triumph over Panthers in conference match | Continued from Page 9

By Sean Douglas

Thursday's CIC matchup between the Eastbrook Panthers and Mississinewa Indians can best be described as sloppy.

Both teams struggled with hitting errors, mental gaffes, and defensive breakdowns, and neither really found much of a rhythm.

However, the Indians, after dropping the first set, found a way to win, defeating the Panthers in four sets to improve to 2-0 in the CIC (23-25, 25-19, 25-13, 25-22).

Mississinewa, a group that has prided themselves on their defense, their communication, and their confidence all season long, lacked in all three areas on Thursday evening. There were several uncharacteristic breakdowns, and the team never seemed to click as they had in previous matches.

"We were so tight. Everything was tight," Mississinewa Head Coach Jody Havens said. "Defensively, we were

not very disciplined. It was very apparent. We did a lot of sloppy things, which completely prevented us from being able to run an offense and take momentum away from us time and time again."

Eastbrook, on the other hand, played well in the first two sets, which included a comeback win in the opening game. However, errors and miscues proved

to be their downfall in the final two as the match eventually slipped away.

"We didn't make the changes that we needed to, and we made way too many errors," Eastbrook Head Coach Bailie Havens said. "We missed serves



Mississinewa libero Sophie Corey and outside hitter Darah Watson get ready to receive a serve in their match with Eastbrook. Photo by Sean Douglas

at crucial moments. We missed hits at crucial moments. And obviously, that affected us in the long run."

Additionally, Mississinewa's front row, particularly Carly Bolser, were a

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72-yard drive with a two-yard touchdown run.

Eastbrook got the ball right back a mere eight seconds later, forcing a Hayden Nelson fumble and recovering the ball at the Indians' 28-yard line.

The Panthers' ensuing drive eventually stalled, but they added to their lead on a 34-yard field goal from Lucas Shilts.

Eastbrook closed out the first quarter with an interception, as Engle took a Rock pass down to the Mississinewa four-yard line. One play later, Collins punched it in from four yards out, giving the Panthers a 23-0 lead.

The Panthers' final two touchdowns were courtesy of the defense. Justin Starr scored on a 20-yard fumble return, while Alden Miller

closed out the first half with a 45-yard pick six.

"We had poor decision making, a lot of inexperience, and guys who just aren't doing their job and don't understand how to do their job right now," Buresh said. "Our effort is really not there."

The Indians did score two touchdowns in the second half - one on an 80yard punt return from Carson Campbell and another on a 62-yard run from Nelson - and forced three fumbles against Eastbrook's second and third units. However, with the running clock, the Indians were unable to muster much of a comeback.

Eastbrook compiled 190 yards of offense. Engle completed six-of-11 passes for 67 yards while rushing for an additional 30. Miller caught two passes for 24 yards. On defense, Starr led the Panthers with six tackles, while Bowser, Starr, Ryan Slater, and Issac Rans combined for six sacks.

The Panthers will travel to Oak Hill next Friday night, and Adamson hopes that the kinks will continue to be worked out as the conference portion of their schedule progresses.

"It's just an accumulation of so many things that make everything feel out of place," Adamson said. "I know everyone is feeling that way right now, but I think we've got a long way to go. Even though we have so many guys that are back, there is just so many things that we normally have in place by this point in the season, and it just sometimes feels awkward because we're not there yet."

For Mississinewa, the goal is to refocus and refresh heading into their Week 4 matchup against the Madison-Grant Argylls.

"We are going to keep fighting," Buresh said. "It's a process. It's a culture change. It's a scheme change, everything. But we just have to get our guys to fight. Ultimately, that's the most important thing, to fight, to give great effort, play physical, and play tough."

"We are going to start from square one next week. We are going to go back to everything culturewise, scheme-wise, you name it. We are literally going to start from square one, get the expectations reset, and get everything recharged for the rest of conference play."

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