CORTLAND, N.Y. – The SUNY Cortland women’s volleyball team claimed its 12th State University of New York Athletic Conference title and its seventh in the last eight years with a 3-1 victory over defending champion Oneonta in the league championship match. The Red Dragons earn the SUNYAC’s automatic berth to the NCAA Division III tournament and will begin play in their 17th national tournament either Thursday or Friday at a site to be determined.

The Red Dragons (43-2) bounced back versus Oneonta (26-16) after losing the first game, 30-12, to win the final three games 30-19, 30-26 and 30-19. Freshman outside hitter Katie Brody (Apalachin/Vestal), senior middle hitter Katie Pietrzak (Rochester/Greece Arcadia) and senior setter Jamie McMullen (Castile/Letchworth) were named to the SUNYAC all-tournament team. Brody registered 12 kills and 13 digs in the finals. Pietrzak had six kills, nine digs, four blocks and two aces and McMullen finished with 30 assists, nine digs, two aces and two blocks.

Cortland and Oneonta were the first and second seeds, respectively, from the East division during conference regular-season play. Oneonta earned its spot in the finals with a 3-2 upset over West division top seed Fredonia, 27-30, 30-17, 30-28, 22-30, 15-10.

Cortland advanced to the finals with a hard-fought 3-2 win over Brockport (23-13), the second seed from the West, in the semifinals. Game scores were 30-28, 28-30, 31-29, 22-30, 15-9. The Red Dragons trailed 22-15 and 28-25 in the third game. A 4-0 run, which included two kills and an ace by Brody, gave Cortland a 29-28 lead. At 29-29, the Red Dragons ended the game on kills by junior Barbie Lang (Cuba/Cuba-Rushford) and junior Natalie Pizzi (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin). In the decisive fifth game, the Red Dragons raced out to a 7-1 lead and held at least a three-point lead the rest of the game.

Brody paced the Red Dragons over Brockport with 13 kills, 11 digs and two blocks. Pietrzak had 11 kills, eight blocks and seven digs, Lang added nine kills, seven blocks and 13 digs and senior Andrea Smith (San Diego, CA/Frontier Central (NY)) contributed seven kills, 20 digs and two blocks.

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