NEW YORK, N.Y. - Cortland opened with a pair of victories during the first day of the second annual SUNY/CUNY Women’s Volleyball Challenge, hosted by Hunter College. The Red Dragons (24-1) opened with a 30-18, 30-19, 32-30 victory over Baruch College, then posted a 30-4, 30-17, 30-23 win against Lehman College. Cortland will wrap up tournament play on Saturday with matches versus York College (N.Y.) at 9 a.m. and Hunter at 3 p.m.

Senior outside hitter Barbie Lang (Cuba/Cuba-Rushford) and freshman outside hitter Lauren Rakita (Lake Grove/Sachem) led the Red Dragons versus Baruch with seven kills apiece. Rakita finished with a .875 hitting percentage. Senior setter Jamie McMullen (Castile/Letchworth) had 19 assists and five aces, sophomore outside hitter Katie Brody (Apalachin/Vestal) had 15 digs and freshman middle hitter Alice Khars (Kings Park) and junior setter Lizz Rakita (Lake Grove/Sachem) added two blocks each.

Against Lehman, Lauren Rakita finished with eight kills and senior middle hitter Siobhan Loughlin (Hauppauge) contributed seven kills. McMullen had nine assists on only 11 attempts and Lizz Rakita recorded nine assists. Junior outside hitter Danielle Turner (Farmingville/Sachem) and senior outside hitter Natalie Pizzi (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin) registered four aces each, with Turner also tallying nine digs. Khars finished with two blocks.

Cortland is one of five SUNYAC teams competing in the tournament along with Brockport, New Paltz, Geneseo and Potsdam. The City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) is represented by Baruch, Lehman, York and Hunter. CUNYAC member Medgar Evers is also in the tournament, but for Friday’s competition only.

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