

# SPORTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019 | MADISON.COM | SECTION B

## UW VOLLEYBALL | NCAA ELITE EIGHT



AMBER ARNOLD PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL

UW players celebrate a point during the second set of Saturday's regional final against Nebraska at the UW Field House.

# Sweeping sensation

## Defense stymies Huskers, delivers third Final Four trip

DENNIS PUNZEL  
For the State Journal

Sydney Hilley had a message for her teammates as they prepared to start what could prove to be the biggest set of the year to date for the University of Wisconsin volleyball team.

"Going into the third set, I said, 'Guys, this is going to go to the red zone because I want it to,'" Hilley said. "It's so fun to be in those moments and I'm so confident in our team in those moments that I wanted that to happen."

The junior setter proved prophetic as the Badgers found themselves in yet another tight set against Big Ten Conference rival Nebraska. And just like nearly all the previous eight sets against the Cornhuskers, the Badgers made the plays they needed down the stretch as they finished off a 25-18, 25-22, 25-19 sweep before a full house at the UW Field House to earn a trip to the NCAA Final Four next week in Pittsburgh.



Hilley

"I think every little girl, when they start playing volleyball, they always dream of moments like these and I know our whole team has," said redshirt junior Molly Haggerty, who was named the MVP of the regional after recording a match-high 14 kills. "So to experience it is just amazing. It's hard to put into words, but really, really happy and proud of this team."

The No. 4 seed Badgers (26-6) will meet top-seeded Baylor (28-1) in a national semifinal on Thursday. The Bears defeated the Badgers in four sets early this season at the Field House.

But the Badgers will start thinking about that later.

"Probably not going to worry too much about that this evening," coach Kelly Sheffield said.

The trip to the Final Four is the third in program history, the most recent being in Sheffield's first season when UW advanced to the final before losing to Penn State in 2013. The Badgers lost to Nebraska in the championship



## Badgers 3, Nebraska 0

**Key:** The Cornhuskers are held to a season-low .062 hitting percentage.

**Next:** 6 or 8:30 p.m. Thursday, vs. Baylor in NCAA semifinal, Pittsburgh, ESPN.

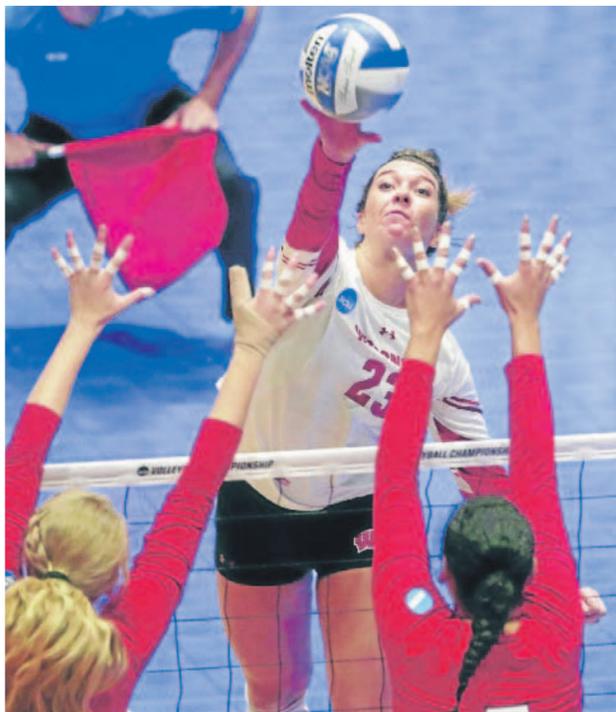
match in 2000.

While the Badgers were able to sweep the Cornhuskers (28-5) all three times this season, every set was close until the final points, with the Badgers making the decisive plays down the stretch.

"I think when we get to those moments, that's where we thrive," senior libero Tiffany Clark said. "We love being in those moments because we practice those all the time. So, yeah, it's just a fun time to be in, and I think we just have this like killer mentality in that red zone."

The first set was an anomaly as the Badgers took command with an early 6-0 run that featured two

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Regional MVP Molly Haggerty hits against Nebraska's Callie Schwarzenbach, left, and Jaz Sweet during the third set. Haggerty had a match-high 14 kills.

## BUCKS

# Giannis, Middleton help winning streak hit 18

## Overtake Lakers for league's best record

RICH ROVITO  
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The streaking Milwaukee Bucks are not slowing down.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points and Khris Middleton

had 24 on Saturday night to lead the Bucks to their 18th consecutive victory, 125-108 over the Cleveland Cavaliers at Fiserv Forum.

The Bucks have won 22 of their last 23 and improved to 24-3, one-half



Giannis A.

game ahead of the idle Los Angeles Lakers for the best record in the league. The Bucks have not lost since Nov. 8 at Utah.

The streak is the second longest in franchise history. The Bucks won 20 consecutive games in the 1970-71 season on the way to winning their lone NBA championship.

Kevin Porter Jr. had 15 points

and Jordan Clarkson scored 13 for the Cavaliers (6-20), who grabbed a brief lead in the second quarter on a jumper by Clarkson but were then outscored 34-14 to close the period.

The Bucks' lead grew to as many as 28 points in the third quarter, and they cruised the rest of the way.

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## Bucks 125, Cavaliers 108

**Key:** Milwaukee leads by 18 points at halftime.

**Next:** 7 p.m. Monday, vs. Dallas, Fiserv Forum, FSW.



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