

Ag men spikers beachcomb for fans

By MARYBETH ROHSNER
Reporter

While most of us are cruising to the beaches with Coppertone in hand, the Texas A&M men's volleyball team is trading beach towels for bump shots and suntans for setups.

Instead of starting spring break on Saturday, the team will travel to Houston to represent A&M in the first of a string of United States Volleyball Association tournaments. Team vice president Paul DeVries said this weekend's tournament is just a "warm-up."

"We have three or four new guys just starting out," DeVries said. "And this will give them practice before the next few tournaments."

Though three starting players graduated in December, DeVries is pleased with the new members' performance.

"The new members are doing well to fill in the vacant spots on the team," he said.

Even with the loss of three starters, DeVries isn't sweating it. A&M ended last semester with a 33-5 record, guaranteeing the team a spot at the USVBA regional competition in April.

Although interest in the 30-man team has grown since the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics, DeVries doesn't foresee an NCAA men's team at A&M in the near future.

"In the South, there are not too many NCAA (varsity) teams," DeVries said. "I guess football is number one down here."

Although only one college in the Lone Star Region — the University of Texas at San Antonio — has an NCAA team, DeVries said that the Pac-10 and Southeastern conferences have well-established men's volleyball programs. Therefore, if A&M was a full-fledged NCAA team, it would have to do a fair bit of

traveling out-of-state to play the better teams.

"There are not enough teams in the conference, and it's just not economically feasible to travel to California (and Florida) to play in a tournament," DeVries said.

Since the team is not part of the A&M Athletic Department, the intramural department provides travel and equipment funds for the team.

The A&M women's volleyball team, which is a member of the NCAA, receives funding from the Athletic Department. And Aggie fans have started supporting the nationally-ranked team.

"The women's team is really popular," DeVries said. "It's strange that we can't get more people to come out."

But DeVries doesn't seem to mind. The team has more freedom than it would if it were part of the Athletic Department.

"As things are, anybody can come out to practices," he said. "All they have to do to join is pay the USVBA fee."

He said most of A&M's players never played in high school. They simply came to a practice and decided to join.

Granted, the recruiting methods are casual. Even so, the team is far from disorganized. The men practice three times a week with the coaching of faculty advisor Noel Orr. The hard work has paid off — the team had four first-place finishes and two second-place finishes in last semester's tournaments and came in fourth in regional competition.

And, though last semester's hot-shot spiking and blocking earned the team a bid to this year's regional competitions, the battle is far from over.

The team is still looking for a few good fans.

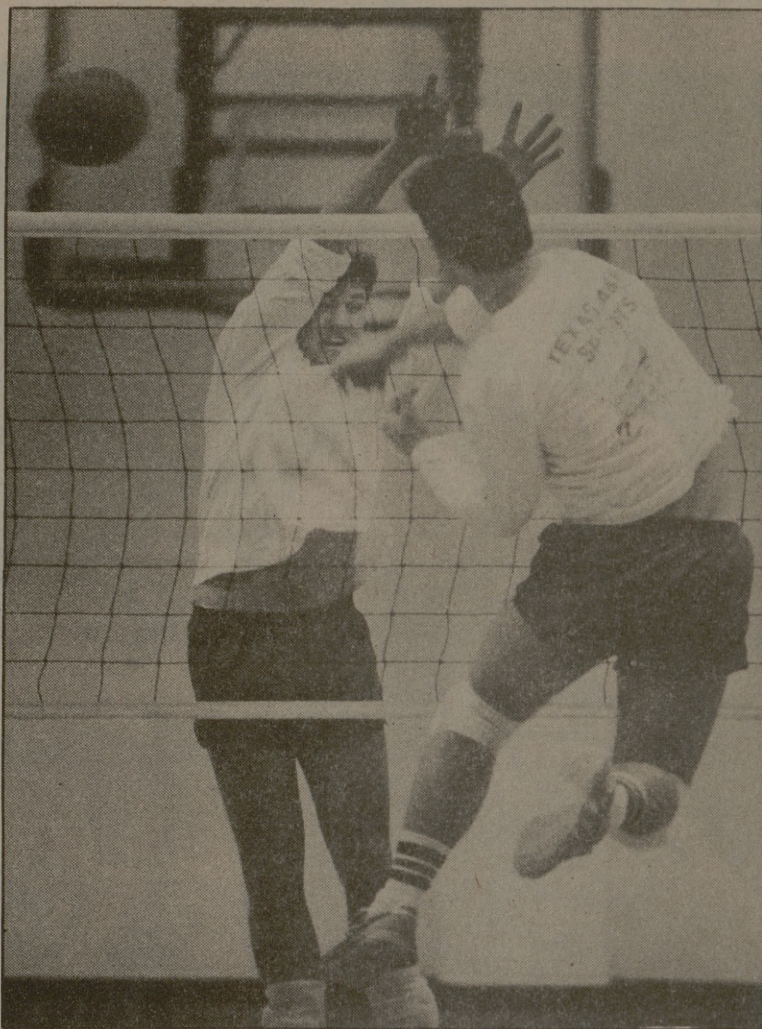


Photo by DEAN SAITTO

The A&M men's volleyball team's hard work led to four first-place finishes, two seconds and a fourth last semester.

Greene 'lifts' herself into record books

By DOUG HALL
Reporter

At age 23 and 114 pounds, Laurie Greene is attractive, engaged and can dead-lift almost three times her weight.

Greene, a senior health and physical education major from Lake Charles, La., is a member of the Texas A&M Powerlifting Team and holds nine national records.

"I got started in lifting about 3½ years ago," Greene said. "A friend of mine was interested in it, so I went with her. I liked it and stayed with it."

Greene transferred to A&M in December after two years of lifting for McNeese State University to continue her training under Chad DeRousselle, a strength coach in the athletic program who is also Greene's fiance.

Powerlifting is composed of three events — bench-press, squat and dead-lift. It is similar to boxing in its division into various weight classes and federations.

The United States Powerlifting Federation (USPF) has sponsored the National Collegiate Championships as well as the state and regional meets since its formation in 1964. However, three years ago, the American Drug-Free Powerlifting Association (ADFPA) was organized

and began sponsoring their own collegiate competition. The ADFPA does not condone the use of steroids.

"National drug-free collegiate has tried to break away from the other," Greene said. "They have tried to make it more fair for those who do not choose to use drugs."

In addition to the great physical strain powerlifting requires, Greene said there is also a large amount of mental preparation involved.

"I'm a national champion," Greene said, "so you always have to give 100 percent. But just like anybody else, I have hard days. Sometimes it's hard to get motivated."

"I'd say more than 75 percent of the sport is mental. You have to go through things in your mind all the time and think positive."

Greene spends five days a week working on the 25 percent of the competition she attributes to strength. She alternates days working on both her upper and lower body and devotes Saturday's to her dead-lift under the direction of DeRousselle.

The work is hard and time consuming, but Greene said there are many benefits that make powerlifting worth the effort.

"Trophies don't mean that much to me anymore," she said. "They are nice to show, but there is always a personal record to break. You show

yourself you are achieving something. It makes you feel good about yourself."

In most meets, women's powerlifting is not broken down into weight divisions, but divided on a weight system called the Malone formula which determines the strongest pound for pound lifter.

"Most meets, except for nationals and state, do not have enough girls to compete in weight classes," Greene said.

"It's hard to get girls involved in powerlifting. They think of The Incredible Hulk and big, muscular girls."

Greene said women's powerlifting and body-building are very different sports.

"I can appreciate the art (of body-building)," she said, "but it is something I could never do. There's only a certain extent to which your body should go."

"I think powerlifting has enhanced my appearance. It's added more muscle tone and definition. Not really muscular, but you can tell a difference. You can still lift for strength and not get real big, unless you use drugs."

Greene said this is her last year to lift in college so she can concentrate on two national meets. The USPF Collegiate Championships are being held at West Point, N.Y., on March



A&M's Laurie Greene

22-23 and the drug-free meet will be held at A&M on April 13 and 14.

Greene, who has won national collegiate titles in the 105 and 123 pound weight classes, hopes to repeat her performance at West Point to qualify for the World Championships this summer.

Is there a future for women in powerlifting? Greene thinks so.

"They have been trying to push it (women's powerlifting) into the Olympics," Greene said. "I think it will be in there by 1988. It's being pushed and made more of a spectator sport."

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