



staff photo by David Fisher

Aggie Ladies' middle blocker Jennifer Giese leaps high into the air to spike a shot toward members of the Illinois State squad in Thursday night's match, won by Texas A&M in five games.

Linda Clausen (4), a junior hitter, gets set for a possible return by the Redbirds. The Aggie Ladies host the A&M Invitational, featuring four state teams, Saturday in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Season opener successful

Aggie Ladies set Redbirds

by John P. Lopez
Battalion Staff

The Aggie women's volleyball team spotted Illinois State the first two games Thursday night, but came on strong in the later stages to defeat the Redbirds in a match that was much closer than coach Terry Condon expected.

"They (the Redbirds) were really playing well," Condon said. "They're a lot better than they were last year."

Another factor contributing to the Redbirds' early lead, Condon said, was a case of nervousness on the part of the Aggie Ladies.

"We couldn't do anything at first," she said, "but if you ignore those first two games, I think we did real well. We still need to

work on a few things, but overall we did a good job."

The Aggie Ladies lost their butterflies in the third game when Lisa Johnson, Sherri Brinkman and Joey Vrazel took control of the match. In the third game, Johnson played a key role in the comeback when she single-handedly accounted for 10 of the Aggies' 15 points by serving for seven points and spiking three more to the floor herself.

From then on it was Brinkman and Vrazel dueling each other for the spotlight. Both players played spectacularly in the final three games. They blocked several shots, made diving saves of spikes, perfectly placed dink (soft) shots and

spiked with authority.

"They were just hitting and placing the ball real well tonight," Condon said. "But that's the kind of play I'm going to expect, especially from Joey. I know Joey can play like she did tonight all the time."

Cathy Frederick also played a key role in the comeback, Condon said.

"She's one of the more experienced setters and better servers on the team, so I would substitute her in and out in certain situations," she said. Condon used Maureen Dunn as a setter when Frederick was out of the game.

"Maureen is a little taller so I used her in the front of the net for blocking purposes," she said.

Brinkman, Vrazel and Johnson showed their importance in the fifth game when, after Texas A&M fell behind 8-4, they scored or assisted in scoring the Aggie Ladies' next five points. Johnson tied the score at nine with a dink shot that fell over the outstretched arms of the Redbird blockers.

The Aggie Ladies then took control and held ISU scoreless the rest of the game. The final score of the match was 10-15, 7-15, 15-9, 15-8, 15-9 — good enough to satisfy Condon.

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Rookies

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avoid those, we'll have a good season." Encountering players like Brian Sipe, Tom Cousineau and fellow rookie Chip Banks has been an exciting experience, Baldwin said.

"It's been a real thrill," he said. "I'm up here with all the guys I've been watching on TV all the time ... I'm amazed that I'm here."

The Browns have been noted for their offensive firepower in the past, but this season, the situation should be different, Baldwin said.

"They're saying that for the first time, the defense is on the same level as the offense, so we should be pretty balanced," he said. "Sunday's (season opener) with Seattle should be a challenge for the defense, because Seattle has a good quarterback (Jim Zorn) and a good receiver in (Steve) Largent."

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