

Sports

A&M's Gildner playing for memories

By Danny Myers
Sports Writer

Texas A&M outside hitter Stacey Gildner is making her final volleyball season one to remember. Gildner was the Southwest Conference player of the week last week, and was named to the all-tournament team at the Colorado State tournament Saturday along with teammate Margaret Spence.

The Aggies, 14-4, finished second in the tournament with their only loss to 15th-ranked Colorado State.

A&M defeated 17th-ranked LSU in the tournament and that victory helped boost the Aggies into NCAA Top 20 poll for the first time this season.

This was the second week in a row for Gildner and Spence to be named to an all-tournament team; they were also selected at the Oklahoma tournament.

Gildner, a senior exercise technology major, said her play at Oklahoma was more consistent than usual, and that may be why she was named SWC player of the week.

"My (jump serve) was a lot better and I served a lot more than normal," she said.

The 5-foot-8 Gildner began playing volleyball as a sophomore at Alberta Lea High School in Minnesota where she also ran track and played basketball.

She decided she liked volleyball more and played her freshman year at the University of Minnesota at Duluth where she was named Rookie of the Year. But she didn't stay.

"I didn't like the program there," she said, "I was looking for a different style of play."

So Gildner said she took a magazine with the Top 20 teams listed and wrote letters to all of teams on the bottom half of that poll.

"They (A&M) wrote me back and I came down here for a visit and ended up playing for A&M," she said.

"When I came down here (ex-Head Coach Terry Condon) had never seen me play and I asked her to take a chance on me and she did," Gildner said.

Gildner and her teammates will face the 7-5 Houston Cougars in Hofheinz Pavilion at 7:30 p.m. tonight.

The Aggies are 1-0 in SWC play with their victory over Texas Tech, and their next six games are all against SWC opponents.

Head Coach Al Givens said this is the most important phase of the season for the Aggies.

"Our conference play is tough and we have to take each match one game at a time," he said.

"Houston has some talent and we'll have to go to their place and play well."

"There's no doubt in my mind that we have the better team, but we've all been in sports long enough to know that just having the better personnel doesn't necessarily dictate the outcome of a match... but if we play to our potential, we should win the match."

A&M comes home Oct. 13 to face Baylor and Oct. 15 to take on seventh-ranked Texas.

"It's great to play at G. Rollie White, especially with a lot of fan support," he said.

"I hope the fans will come out and support us in this very important part of our season," Givens said.



Photo by Anthony S. Casper

A&M's Stacey Gildner (9) prepares to spike the ball as Margaret Spence (6) fakes the attack. The Aggies play the Cougars tonight in Houston.

Angels bomb Sox in Game 1

Witt throws 5-hitter in rout

BOSTON (AP) — Mike Witt pitched a five-hitter and the California Angels jolted Boston ace Roger Clemens for four runs in the second inning Tuesday night to beat the Red Sox 8-1 in the first game of the American League playoffs.

Clemens, pitching for the first time since being struck on the right elbow by a line drive last week, could not find his rhythm early on the clear, 50-degree night.

Brian Downing drove in four runs for the Angels who scored more runs against Clemens than any team this year. They pounded him for 10 hits and eight runs, seven earned, in 7 1/2 innings.

Witt, meanwhile, flirted with the first no-hitter in playoff history, holding the Red Sox hitless for 5 1/2 innings before Wade Boggs beat out an infield chopper for a single. The hit broke a string of 16 straight batters retired by Witt after walking Boggs, the major-league batting champion, leading off the first.

When Boggs got his hit, however, Witt and the Angels had the game in control and they coasted the rest of the way in the opener of the best-of-seven series. Game 2 was scheduled for 3:05 p.m. EDT today.

Clemens, the most dominant pitcher in baseball this season with a 24-4 record including a 3-0 mark against the Angels, came out throwing hard with fastballs exceeding 95 mph. He escaped a two-on, two-out jam in the first inning by retiring Doug DeCinces on a drive to the center-field wall, and opened the second by easily striking out Rob Wilfong and Dick Schofield.

But then Clemens, averaging just over two walks per game this season, suddenly ran into trouble. He walked Bob Boone on a 3-1 pitch and narrowly missed on a full-count delivery to Gary Pettis.

Ruppert Jones followed with a line single up the middle and rookie Wally Joyner, who had doubled in the first inning, sliced an RBI double into the left-field corner that made it 2-0.

After Clemens threw ball one to Brian Downing, Red Sox pitching coach Bill Fischer walked hurriedly to the mound to talk with his struggling ace. As soon as the visit was over and Sammy Stewart began warming up, Downing lined a two-run single into the left-field corner.

By the time Clemens finished striking out Reggie Jackson, he had thrown 45 pitches in the second inning and had been rocked for four runs in an inning for only the second time this season.

While the crowd of 32,993 sat in stunned silence, the Angels scored again in the third. Shortstop Spike Owen made a high throw for an error on Wilfong's one-out grounder, and singles by Boone and Pettis increased the lead to 5-0. Pettis had been 0-for-9 against Clemens until the hit.

Witt, given a big cushion, breezed through a Boston batting order that had only a collective .178 average against him in his career. The 6-foot-7 right-hander was 18-10 this season, yet was only 1-2 against the Red Sox en route to a 2.66 ERA against them.

Witt walked Owen with two outs in the sixth, snapping his string of 16 consecutive batters.

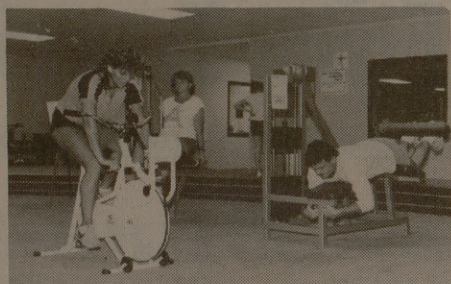
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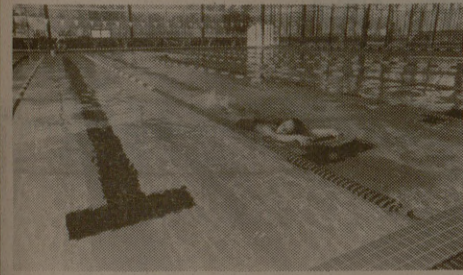
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