

Sports

Van Brandt at home with volleyball Lady Ags' setter 'quarterbacks' young squad

By Tammy Hedgpeh
Sports Writer

Dynamite comes in small packages. After inheriting the position of setter from four-year starter Chris Zogata, 5-7 Yvonne Van Brandt is handling the quarterbacking chores in the A&M offensive scheme unsurprisingly well.

"Some think my height is a factor in volleyball," Van Brandt said. "People always say, 'You play volleyball? You must be the setter!' I just tell them to come out, watch us play, and then evaluate. They think if you're too short or too big then you're not supposed to be in that sport. That just makes me more determined to prove that not so tall people can play volleyball. It's all mental not physical. Of course it helps to be tall and thin, but you just have to put your mind to it and a lot of times I get aggravated."

Van Brandt's small size has not stopped her from being at the top of the Southwest Conference statistical charts. She takes the top seat in digs average and the second seat in assists average.

Van Brandt, a sophomore elementary education major, was a three-year letterwinner in volleyball at Winston Churchill High School in San Antonio. She helped lead her team to the 1985 Texas 5A state crown. Her performance in the 1986 Texas Girls' Coaches Association all-star game resulted in her selection as Most Valuable Player for the contest.

She also played basketball for two years, earning all-city and all-district honors. However, she prefers volleyball over basketball or softball. Active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she was named "Athlete of the Year" for the state of Texas by the FCA as a high school senior.

"I was six years old when I started playing volleyball," Van Brandt said. "I played CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) when I was young and that's how I got interested in volleyball. I grew up playing basketball, volleyball and softball throughout high school."

"I chose volleyball as a college sport because of the atmosphere I had in high school. I was a big time basketball fanatic in middle school, but when I got in high school the at-

mosphere changed. I went through three coaches in four years. That in itself was a main effect. I was really close to my volleyball coach and I still am."

Van Brandt's attitude shows her loyalty to Texas A&M and her blood bleeds maroon.

"I love everything about A&M," she said. "The camaraderie is great. I love the 'Howdy!' I don't think I could have gone to any other university."

Van Brandt comes from a close-knit family of four who has given her all the inspiration she needs to be the best that she can be.

"My parents were always there at everything I did," she said. "They still try to come watch me as much as possible. They have always been behind me in everything I do."

As co-captain and one of the setters of the 1987 women's volleyball team, Van Brandt said she has a responsibility to her team so she must be aggressive.

"Being one of the setters of the team, I have a lot of contacts with the ball. I don't mind throwing my body on the floor and getting bruises. Athletic wise, if the team is successful then individuals are successful."

With the Lady Aggies' record standing at 11-19, Van Brandt said it has been hard to get emotionally up for a game.

"It's been really hard lately to get psyched up, since we're losing," she said. "It's hard to keep a good attitude. It relates to life is too short. My four years are going to be up before I know it. To get psyched up for a game, I try to see the game and who's playing — visualization in my mind. The adrenaline comes as soon as I start to put my uniform on. I'm proud to wear a Texas A&M uniform."

Some people relax by being alone, Van Brandt relaxes by being around people.

"I never listen to the radio or watch TV. I don't have a TV in my room so just being around people helps me. I like to be alone sometimes. I was into reading when I was little but I don't have time now."

Van Brandt suggested to always take parents' advice.

"I never had to learn anything the hard way," she said. "I guess I was

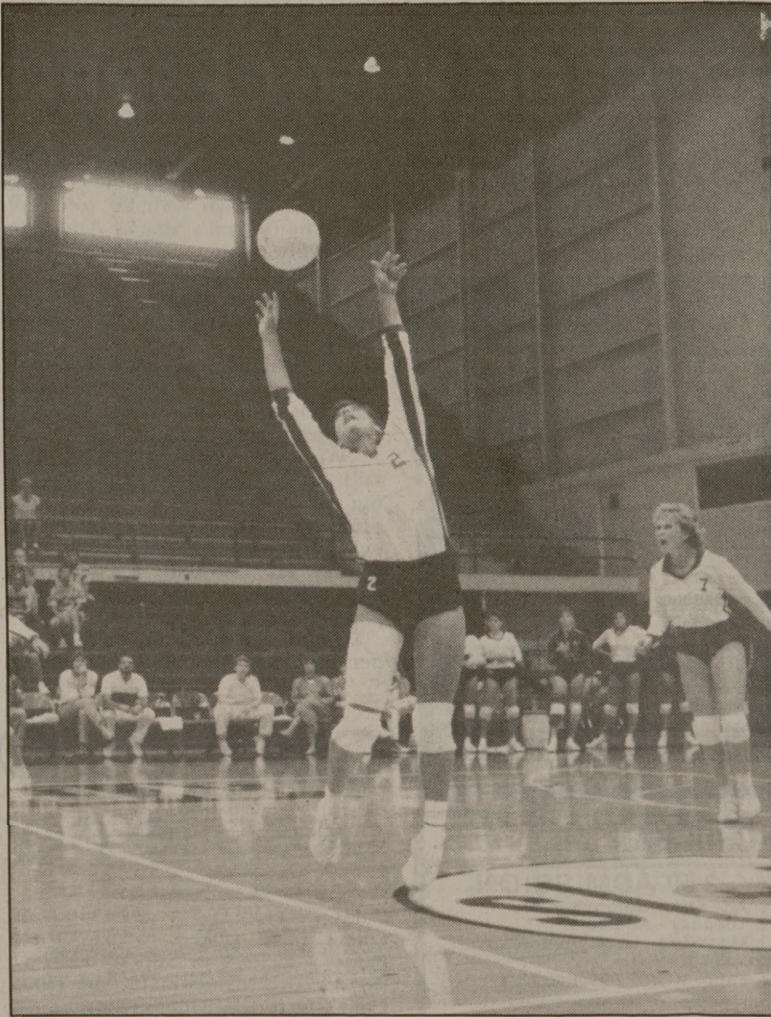


Photo by Jay Janner

Yvonne Van Brandt sets a teammate against New Mexico State earlier this year at the Texas A&M Invitational Volleyball Tournament. Michele Whitwell (No. 7) yells support from the side.

pretty lucky. I stayed away from drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. My parents always taught me whatever I stood for I needed to stand up and believe that.

"They taught me not to let peers pressure you into anything. I think whatever you're going to stand for you need to know why you're standing for it, you need to believe in it, and stand firm. You should have something to back up what you

stand for." To know Van Brandt is to live with her.

"People say I fold my dirty clothes," she laughed, "but I don't. Well, I guess I do have a pretty neat room. I like everything to be organized. My roommate last year told me 'You can be neat. I can try to be neat. But when you get to the point of folding your dirty clothes, you've gone a little bit too far.'"

A&M back in AP Top 20 after 4-week absence

Texas A&M replaced Ohio State in the Associated Press college football poll Monday, while second-ranked Nebraska cut into top-rated Oklahoma's lead for the third week in a row.

Ohio State dropped out following a 13-7 loss to Michigan State. Texas A&M won its fourth straight game, defeating Louisiana Tech 32-3, and made the Top 20 after a four-week absence. The Southwest Conference had not been represented in the Top 20 the last two weeks.

Oklahoma, which has been No. 1 in every poll this season, pounded Kansas 71-10 and received 38 of 60

first-place votes and 1,173 of a possible 1,200 points from a nationwide panel of sports writers and sportscasters.

Nebraska, which defeated Missouri 42-7, received 15 first-place ballots and 1,137 points. The Cornhuskers have been No. 2 all season although both teams have identical 8-0 records.

Last week, Oklahoma led Nebraska 40-13 in first-place votes and 1,176-1,134 in points. The previous week, it was 42-12 and 1,179-1,134 and the week before that 47-7 and 1,184-1,122.

The remaining seven first-place votes and 1,108 points went to Mi-

ami (Fla.), which is No. 3 for the sixth consecutive week after defeating East Carolina 41-3.

The top nine teams are the same as last week. Fourth-ranked Florida State walloped Tulane 73-14 and received 987 points. No. 5 LSU beat Mississippi 42-13 and received 943 points and No. 6 Auburn trimmed Florida 29-6 and received 906 points.

Seventh-ranked UCLA received 835 points after downing Arizona State 31-23. No. 8 Syracuse beat Pitt 24-10 and received 798 points and No. 9 Notre Dame crushed Navy 56-13 and received 751 points.

Florida, No. 10 last week, slipped to 17th after losing to Auburn. Georgia and Clemson, 12th and 14th, respectively, a week ago, are tied for 10th this week. Georgia was idle while Clemson beat Wake Forest 31-17.

Oklahoma State is 12th, with Alabama and South Carolina tied for 13th, followed by Michigan State, Penn State, Florida, Indiana, Tennessee and A&M.

Last week's Second Ten consisted of Indiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Clemson, Ohio State, Alabama, Oklahoma State, Penn State, South Carolina and Michigan State.

Ruzek's 3 field goals keys Cowboys to win

IRVING (AP) — Roger Ruzek's three field goals in the final 4:11 after Jim Jeffcoat's 26-yard interception return had tied the game Monday night rallied the Dallas Cowboys to a 33-24 victory over the New York Giants, severely damaging the playoff chances of the defending Super Bowl champions.

The Cowboys improved to a 4-3 record while the Giants dropped to 1-6. Washington leads the NFC East with a 6-1 record.

Ruzek kicked field goals of 34, 49, 40 and 35 yards and Jones, a defensive end, tipped two passes that the Cowboys turned into interceptions in the fourth quarter.

Ruzek's four field goals in the fourth quarter tied a record set by Garo Yepremian of Detroit in 1966 and Curt Knight of Washington in 1970.

Ruzek's first field goal of the final quarter, a 34-yarder with 11:58 left, was followed by a 49-yarder with 4:11 to play, a 40-yarder with 2:54 left and a 35-yarder with 46 seconds to play.

The fickle Dallas fans proved a big factor in rattling the Giants, who lost to the Cowboys 16-14 in September. New York has lost five of its last six games against Dallas.

Giants quarterback Phil Simms was carried off the field with a

sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee with 2:38 to play after a high-low tackle by Jeffcoat and Ed "Too Tall" Jones. The Giants said the injury was not considered serious and Jeff Rutledge finished the game.

Simms' two second-half touchdown passes to Lionel Manuel, who was wearing a cast for a broken left thumb, gave the Giants a 24-14 lead.

But with 9:53 to play, Jeffcoat took a deflected pass and returned it 26 yards for a touchdown to tie the game 24-24. Jones tipped the ball just like he did in 1985 against the Giants and Simms when Jeffcoat ran 65 yards for a touchdown.

Manuel, who broke his thumb early in the season, caught scoring passes of 50 and 33 yards after Dallas had built a 14-10 half-time lead.

Dallas parlayed a big break into the four-point lead when Tony Galbreath fumbled and linebacker Jesse Penn recovered at the New York 18. Dallas quarterback Danny White hit tight end Doug Cosbie with a two-yard scoring pass with 26 seconds left in the half.

The Cowboys had turned the critical crowd quickly in their favor by scoring the second time they had the ball on Herschel Walker's one-yard dive.

Pokes' Gogan inherits Pozderac's job on line

IRVING (AP) — Rookie Kevin Gogan has inherited one of the albatross positions of the Dallas Cowboys: offensive right tackle.

The Cowboys haven't had a Pro Bowl performer there since Rayfield (The Big Cat) Wright in the early 1970s.

Dallas thought Phil Pozderac, 6-9, 280-pounder from Notre Dame might be the answer of the 1980s but his No. 75 jersey became more famous for other things. Like, "Holding No. 75."

"He was the most famous lineman in the NFL for all the wrong reasons," said offensive line Coach Jim Erkenbeck. "There's no question Phil was a marked man."

Pozderac, a fifth-round draft pick in 1983, suffered two critical holding calls that negated big Dallas gains in a 17-14 loss to the eventual Super Bowl champion New York Giants.

"The referees just started looking for me," he said. "It was a reputation I guess I would have had for my entire playing career."

Two weeks ago Pozderac retired to enter into private business. No other player was given his number. Gogan has number 66.

Gogan, a 1986 eighth-round draft pick from the University of Washington, was thrust into the fray last week in a 37-20 loss to Philadelphia.

lot of work, but he's not playing that bad for a rookie."

Gogan said he didn't figure he could crack into the starting lineup this year.

"I was surprised at Phil's decision," Gogan said. "I thought he was looking pretty good. But now that I have my chance I'm going to try to make the most of it. I don't want to look bad on national television across the nation."

He added, "Football is football and I think I'm catching on fast. The problem is that there is so much to learn."

The Cowboys (3-3) could have two rookies in their offensive line going into tonight's critical NFC East showdown with the Giants, who are 1-5 and hoping to stay alive for the playoffs.

Guard Jeff Zimmerman, a third-round draft choice from Florida, was a starting left guard last week because Nate Newton underwent arthroscopic surgery for a knee injury.

"I thought Jeff handled himself well in his first game," said Dallas Coach Tom Landry. "Of course, the Giants have the best defense in our division. We'll have to see how well he does against their great front-line."

Zimmerman reported to camp overweight and caught considerable heat from Erkenbeck.

"He was out of shape but he's really coming around now," said Erkenbeck.

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