

Friday, September 1, 1989

Lady Ags fall to LSU 3-1

Largest opening crowd in history watches A&M

By Alan Lehmann

Of The Battalion Staff

Despite playing in front of the largest season-opening crowd in the history of Lady Aggie volleyball, Texas A&M couldn't pull off an upset over the Louisiana State Lady Tigers.

The crowd of 1,900 watched A&M lose 7-15, 15-13, 13-15 and 14-16.

Both teams played well defensively, as there were only two runs of more than three points. Unfortunately for A&M, LSU had a five-point run to come from a 14-11 deficit and win the final game.

Yvonne Van Brandt, senior setter from San Antonio, had 25 digs and a team-high .500 hitting average. Playing the entire match, Van Brandt had 48 sets and three aces.

"The crowd was incredible," Van Brandt said. "It really got us pumped up, especially in the last game. It was just such a heart-

breaker to lose when we were so close."

The crowd became a factor after LSU took an 8-1 lead in the opening game. At that point, A&M rebounded to score four of the next five points. However, LSU scored their final six points on an ace, a kill and four A&M errors.

In the second game, A&M erased a 2-0 deficit, and led 7-4 behind three Kelli Kellen kills. With the crowd going wild, LSU committed several errors and dropped behind 13-10. But LSU shook off the deafening effect of the crowd, and narrowed the lead to 14-13 on two Tracey Payne blocks.

Kellen scored the final point on a block of Payne to win the second game.

The Lady Aggies jumped out to a 8-1 lead in the second game on two blocks by Krista Heirholzer, a kill and a block by Kellen, and two aces by Raychelle Michalke.

However, LSU scored seven of the next nine points on five A&M errors. LSU's Nyla Shepherd, a sophomore outside attacker, killed three balls as LSU took a 14-11 lead. A&M then staved off seven game points before falling 15-13.

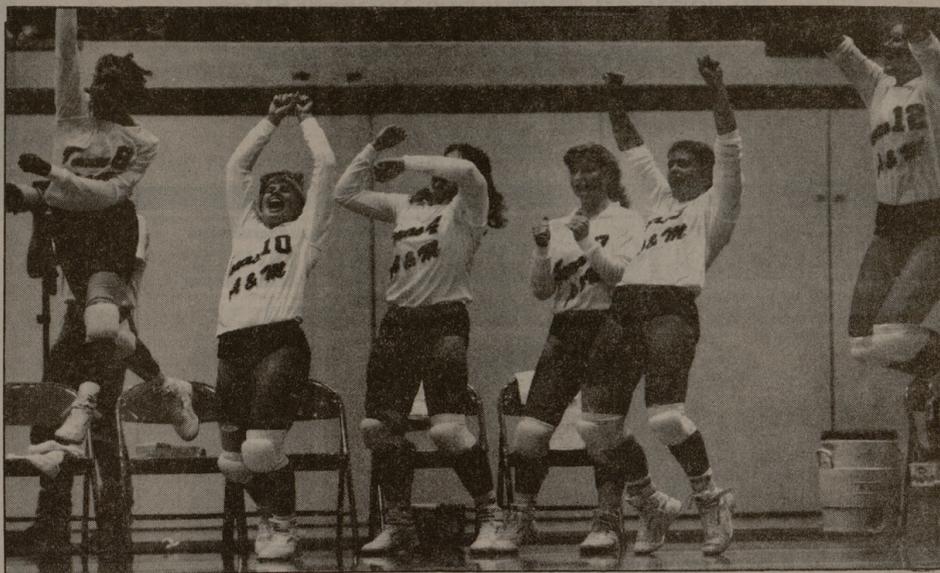
In the final game, LSU grabbed a 5-1 lead on three strong kills. A&M then fought back to take a 7-6 lead on an Heirholzer kill. Three Aggie errors led to an 11-7 lead.

Kellen killed two more in a seven-point A&M run that made the score 14-11, and set the stage for the LSU comeback.

A&M Coach Al Givens said the loss was disappointing, but praised LSU.

"They took advantage of our mistakes," Givens said. "They aren't in the Top 20 yet, but they will be soon."

"We had a lot of serving errors. We'll have to work those out. When we do, we may be in the Top 20, too."



The Texas A&M Lady Aggies celebrate after winning the second game against LSU.

LSU eventually won 3-1 Thursday night at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

A&M could take first opener in five years against tough LSU

I really appreciate ambition. I don't always understand it but I appreciate it nonetheless.

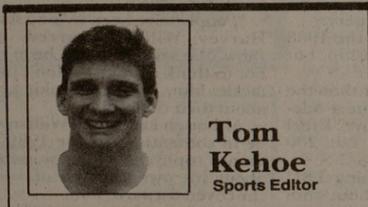
Like when fools climb into the ring with Mike Tyson. Like when Jamaica enters a bobsled team. Like the time I thought I could hack 18 hours and honors classes.

It's because of this appreciation that I applaud A&M's choice of opponents in the games that open their football seasons.

But I don't think I understand it either. The Aggies have dropped six of their last seven openers and the last four in a row.

Home game, away game — it just doesn't seem to matter. The last five opening games have been against Nebraska, LSU, LSU again, Alabama and UTEP. You can probably figure out the one A&M won.

And now it's LSU yet again. It makes you wonder what UTEP is doing this weekend.



Tom Kehoe
Sports Editor

Many in this area perceive Louisiana State University to be some backwoods, bayou outfit that can provide a good challenge to the team that has been to three Cotton Bowls in the 1980s. And that ultimately the Tigers will be the first notch in the win

column on the road to Dallas.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. In case you haven't noticed, and that's why I'm here to point it out to you, LSU has assembled one of the finest athletic programs in the country. Aside from football, which has won two of the last three SEC titles, the Tigers can also claim last year's NCAA track champion, a baseball team that made it to Omaha, a basketball team that took the SEC and made the NCAA, and a top twenty swimming team.

And that's just in men's athletics. The point is what is UTEP doing this weekend? I mean, LSU has outscored A&M 79-20 in their last three meetings and is going into this game ranked tenth, while A&M couldn't crack the Top 25. The Tiger offense returns nine starters, and that doesn't include Harvey "Attitude"

Williams. QB Tommy Hodson has been All-SEC since his freshman season and is said to have an outside shot at the Heisman. Bewildered?

Are you asking, "Is there even a point to this?"

Answer: You bet. All the aforementioned attributes of the Tigers are on one side of the ball: offense. Defense wins games. Look it up.

Defense could be LSU's tragic flaw in Saturday's drama. While many starters return to advance the ball, only four will be there to get it back. And the defection of Tyrone Malone creates even more opportunities for the Aggies.

Obviously Slocum wants to keep coach Mike Archer's offense on the sideline as much as possible. His gameplan is to play ball-control with short Miami-style passes

and application of a strong running game. Let's see how Shannon Cornelius, the redshirt freshman who will replace Malone as the starter, likes a steady progression of Darren Lewis' Tank division rolling through his right-side linebacking area.

Last year in Baton Rouge, Lewis and fellow starters receiver Rod Harris and fullback Matt Gurley missed the game with injuries. And although starting QB Bucky Richardson was able to play, he was ineffective due to an injury suffered in the Nebraska game.

Any way Slocum approaches it, LSU can be beaten, opening game or not. Even the odds-makers think so, who are making A&M only a two-point underdog.

That is if the Aggies can summon the same ambition they found against UTEP in '84.

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