

Ags to face Tar Heels in next round

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

The Texas A&M Volleyball Team rolled through the first round of the NCAA Tournament by sweeping Stephen F. Austin State University yesterday. Tonight the Aggies will host the University of North Carolina with hopes of another dominant win.



CORBELLI

The first-round sweep was a big positive for an Aggie team that in previous seasons has struggled to get in a groove during the first round.

"Tonight [against SFA] gives us a lot of confidence and momentum," Corbelli said. "The minute we had mistakes, we picked it right back up and rebound. We know where our strengths lie and we have a lot of confidence in our strengths."

The Aggies will look to capitalize on their strengths to gain a berth into its third "Sweet Sixteen." But first they will have to get past the Tar Heels (27-5) who also had a sweep last night in College Station.

North Carolina was led by junior outside hitter Casey Simpson who had 14 kills to push the Tar Heels past Northern Arizona (19-9).

A&M will look to capitalize on its momentum and homecourt advantage to carry it over the Tar Heels to stay alive in the tournament.

"We're at home, and the Twelfth Man gives us an incredible advantage," Corbelli said. "The team responded, and I think tomorrow night we're going to be on fire."

12th-ranked Aggies advance to 2nd round

Texas A&M Volleyball Team runs home winning streak to 19 games in three-set victory

BY BREE HOLZ
The Battalion

In its first match of the NCAA tournament, the 12th-ranked Texas A&M Volleyball Team crushed Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), 15-4, 15-7, 15-1 last night at G. Rollie White Coliseum in front of a crowd of 1,235.

The Aggies advance to the second round of the tournament to face the University of North Carolina, who defeated Northern Arizona University prior to the A&M-SFA match in three games.

A&M volleyball coach Laurie Corbelli said she attributes the team's confidence in their strengths to getting the win.

"In the past we've had some first-time performances in the NCAAs when we've had a breakdown in offense," she said. "But this team knows what their doing, and tonight's match gives us a lot of momentum for our next match."

With the win, the Aggies improve to 26-5 overall, while SFA finished its season at 26-10.

A&M jumped to a quick 3-0 lead in the first game of the match with kills from sophomore outside hitter Michelle Cole and senior outside hitter Summer Strickland, but SFA answered by scoring four consecutive points, mostly off A&M miscues.

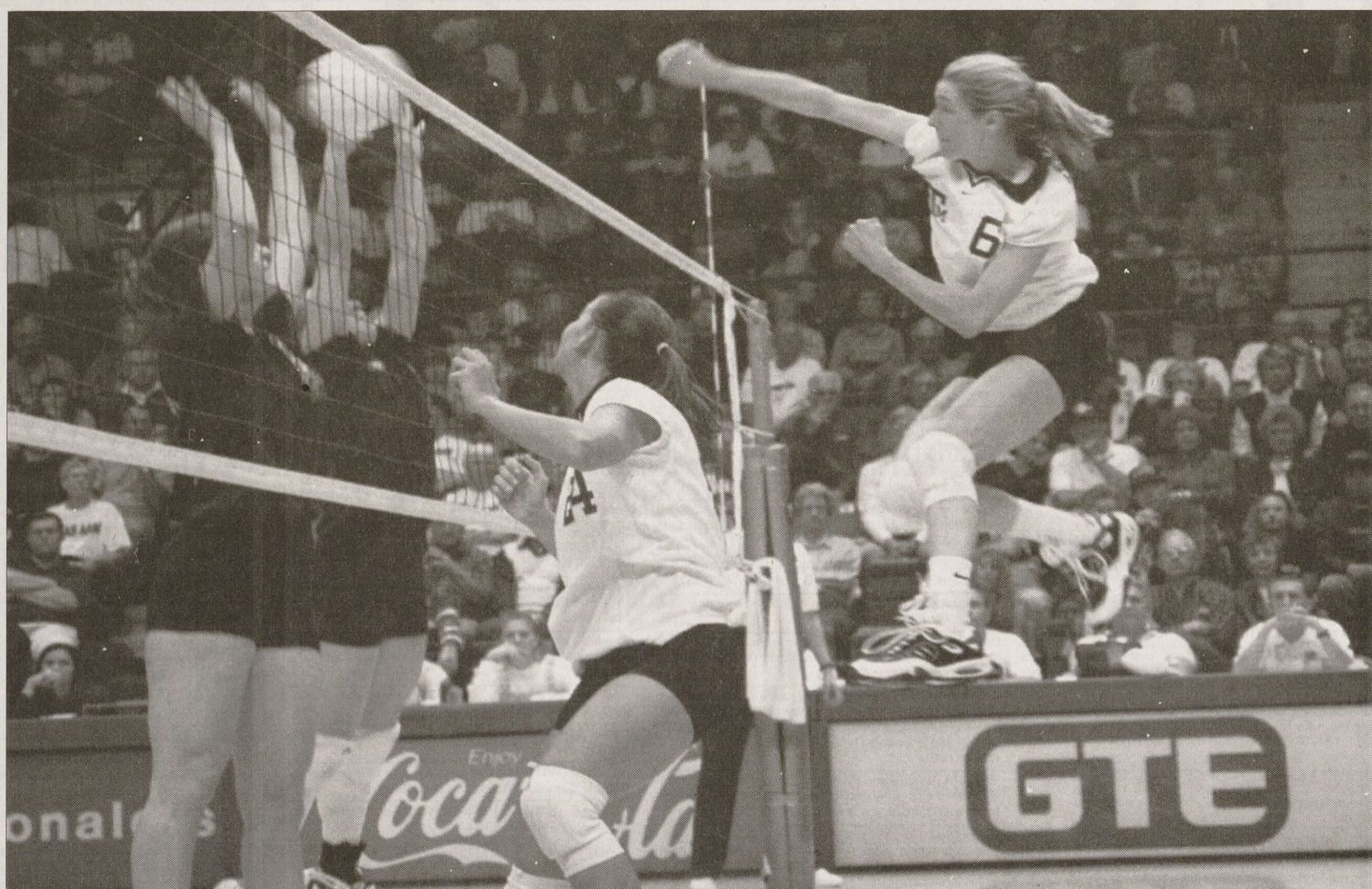
The Aggies regained their composure to go on a 6-0 run, due to solid hitting from Strickland and senior middle blocker Amber Woolsey.

SFA was forced to call its first timeout of the game, but could not muster any momentum, as A&M scored six straight points to win the first game.

"We had to calm [the team] down a little tonight because there was so much adrenaline," Corbelli said. "Their timing was a little different at first, but they calmed down."

Game two began much like the first with the Aggies taking an early 4-0 lead. With Woolsey and Strickland continuing to dominate the net, SFA found itself in an 8-3 hole.

However, SFA returned from a timeout and cut the lead to 9-6, which forced A&M to call its first timeout of the match. Strickland, Woolsey, and Moskovic returned to score the next three points of the game and the Aggies came out victorious.



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

A&M senior middle blocker Lauri Leahy spikes the ball against Stephen F. Austin State University last night at G. Rollie White Coliseum in the Aggies' first-round win over SFA. A&M plays the University of North Carolina tonight at 7 at G. Rollie White.

Cole and Woolsey continued to put down kills, which helped the Aggies to an early 7-0 lead in game three.

A&M's blocking game began to take charge, as Strickland and senior middle blocker Lauri Leahy connected for a stuff, and then two sideouts later, Strickland posted a straight-down solo block. A&M ended the match with a block from sophomore out-

side hitter Brandi Mount.

Corbelli said the team's excellent blocking was a key factor in the win.

"We're very athletic, and I think we throw teams off because we're not huge," she said. "[The team] has a good feel for how to execute and they have a lot of confidence in that skill."

The Aggies outhit SFA .357 to .041, and outblocked them 13-1.

Woolsey recorded a match-high 13 kills and posted a .435 hitting percentage, while Strickland followed with 11 kills and a .375 percentage.

Woolsey said the team's main goal is to focus on the task at hand.

"Our big goal is to play our game," Woolsey said. "We have to focus on one team at a time and take care of business tomorrow night."

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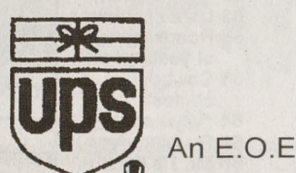
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