

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Volleyball team prepares to host Oklahoma



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION

Sophomore Lexy Beers completes a set in the Aggies' match against Baylor last week.

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

When A&M volleyball head coach Laurie Corbelli prepared her team to play at the University of Oklahoma four weeks ago, she set lofty expectations.

Among other things, she wanted a .300 hitting percentage, a one-to-one ratio of service aces-to-errors and at least three blocks per game.

Her team responded by ripping the Sooners in three games and claiming its only Big 12 road win of the season.

"Every attacker on the court, every blocker, every digger was very much performing and in the game," Corbelli said. "We played consistent, efficient volleyball. We had the most incredible match that we've had all season."

The two teams will meet for the final time this season tonight at G. Rollie White Coliseum at 7 p.m.

Now, though, A&M's role has changed.

Since the match in Norman, Okla., the Aggies (13-7, 5-6 Big 12) have gone 2-4 and seen their chance at a conference title shattered by inconsistent play.

A&M is tied with Colorado for sixth place in the league and hasn't been above .500 in conference play since the win over OU.

With a match against Colorado on

Saturday, a win over the Sooners is a must for the Aggies.

"It's important for our confidence and for the rest of our season," Corbelli said. "Not only a win, but we need a really strong performance. It's a match we can't afford to not play well."

Losing to the Sooners (8-13, 2-9) doesn't look that likely on paper since OU has lost seven straight matches. The Sooners almost ended that streak last Saturday, but fell to Kansas in five games.

"We have to win this match, and the tough part is that the pressure is on us."

— Laurie Corbelli
A&M head volleyball coach

"We have to win this match, and the tough part is that the pressure is on us," Corbelli said. "We haven't done really well with pressure. We're still learning to handle it, and learning to relax and play."

A&M suffered a sweep at Nebraska on Saturday, but the loss was not typical. It left the Aggies with a glimmer

of hope after staying competitive with the No. 4 Huskers.

The first two games were decided by a total of six points, and the Aggies posted a .425 hitting percentage in game one.

"That was a big step in the right direction," said middle blocker Tara Pulaski. "We hung with them as much as any team has this year, and if we can play like that against any other team in the Big 12, we'll be right there."

Pulaski leads the Aggies with a .329 hitting percentage and posted a team-high .476 mark against the Huskers.

Sophomore setter Lexy Beers said the match against Nebraska was key to maintaining a positive outlook for the Aggies. Beers posted 33 assists Saturday, and her 12.29 assists per game ranks fourth in the league.

"It was a hard-fought match so our hopes are high," Beers said. "It would be harder (to have a good attitude) if we were getting killed. We're playing hard and we're fighting, and that helps."

A&M has not lost to OU since 1979, as the Aggies have run off 19 consecutive wins. The Aggies have swept the Sooners in the last 12 matches.

"You can't overlook any team in the Big 12," Beers said. "It's such a tough conference. We're going to have to go in focused on our game and play hard and consistent."

Anaheim fans celebrate Angels' World Series with parade

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — With Jackie Autry riding alongside Mickey Mouse, tens of thousands of screaming Angels fans cheered their championship team Tuesday at a Disneyland parade.

Manager Mike Scioscia held the World Series trophy aloft in a theme park awash in Angels red, with shirts, hats and faces painted with halos.

Many people lined up outside the theme park before dawn in hopes of getting good seats along what was being called the highway to heaven.

Autry, the widow of Gene Autry, who formed the expansion team in

1961 before selling it to The Walt Disney Co., rode in the parade with Mickey Mouse.

A second parade followed, beginning at Arrowhead Pond, home of the NHL's Mighty Ducks, and ending at Edison Field, home of the Angels. Players, coaches and their families rode on top of a dozen fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to the stadium, where a rally was held.

Mike Goetz, 44, arrived at Edison Field at 5:30 a.m. with signs that read, "Thanks for the dream, Walt and Gene" and "And after the seventh

game, we party."

The parade and rally at Edison Field were free. However, fans had to buy admission to Disneyland.

Cherie-Amor Rodriguez, 17, said she got her mother's permission to skip school.

"I probably shouldn't tell you that, but we wanted to make sure we were here," she said in Disneyland.

Disney characters carrying ThunderStix and other paraphernalia took to the streets to rally the crowd.

"I'm here for these wonderful guys called the Angels," Linda Johnen said.

She held ThunderStix on which she had written, "They are the wind beneath my wings."

The Angels had never won a playoff series before beating the New York Yankees this month in an American League division series. They followed by beating Minnesota to win the pennant.

The Angels, long shots to win the World Series at the beginning of the season, beat the Giants on Sunday night to win the first championship in the team's 42-year history.

The victors have been making the rounds. Five Angels joked on "The

Tonight Show" with host Jay Leno, and first baseman Scott Spiezo read the Top 10 List on David Letterman's "The Late Show."

On the list of the Top 10 remarks he reportedly overheard in the Anaheim locker room: "I feel bad for Barry Bonds. Just kidding."

At Edison Field, Kelly Baas, 18, arrived for the parade wearing angel wings and a halo.

"Everyone is making fun of me, but I don't care," she said. "I missed school. I missed work. I missed everything to be here."



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Scott Kay



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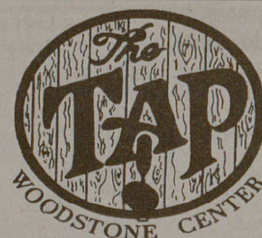
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