Written by Ryan Bower
Sunday, 11 November 2012 08:55

Appalachian State University volleyball fell to Southern Conference rival Chattanooga, 3-1, in the second to last match of the season on Saturday night at the Holmes Center. The Mountaineers (7-22, 3-12 SoCon) nearly rallied from an early 2-0

deficit to send the match to a decisive fifth set, but the Mocs (13-17, 7-8) were able to hold off a late Appalachian rally to pick up the four-set win.

In the first set, neither team was able to gain an advantage until Chattanooga pulled away with a 5-0 run midway through to take an 18-13 lead, but the Apps rallied with a 4-0 run later in the set to take a 23-22 lead. The Mountaineers had the Mocs pinned to the wall with a 26-25 advantage and a set victory in sight, but Chattanooga staved off defeat and earned a hard-fought 28-26 first-set win.

The second set saw the Mocs race out to a 17 point lead (16-9) before the Apps began their comeback. Trailing by eight (21-13) late in the set, the Mountaineers reeled off six-straight points to close the gap to two points, but could not overcome the early deficit and lost 25-19.

Appalachian responded much better in the third set as it led by as many as nine points (19-10) before the Mocs made a comeback attempt of their own. Chattanooga, which trailed by 11 points (24-13) pieced together a 5-0 run to cut the Mountaineer lead to 24-18 before Jessica Eley put down the set-clinching kill.

The fourth and final set saw another back-and-forth battle ensue as the Mocs rallied from an early 6-1 deficit to take a 12-11 lead midway through. After trading the lead several times in the closing moments, Appalachian led by one point (23-22), but the Mocs scored three points in a row to put the Mountaineers away.

Jacqui Spurgeon and Dalton Tolliver led the Apps with 11 kills each while Eley finished with nine kills, two solo blocks and four block assists. Courtney Rhein tallied a team-best 26 digs while Lauren Brown and Paige Brown each notched double-doubles in digs and assists. Chattanooga was paced by a match-high 20 kills from Sarah Batterton, who also finished with five block assists. Paula Passmore led the Mocs with 29 digs and Bridget Camacho tallied 56 assists. The Mountaineers hit .122 on the attack while Chattanooga posted a .151 hitting percentage. The Apps finished with 14 total blocks to eight for the Mocs.

Appalachian State closes out the season tomorrow when it faces Samford at 2 p.m. at the Holmes Center. Rhein, this year's lone senior, will be honored in a pregame ceremony.

MATCH NOTES: Rhein increased her career dig total to 1,858 after breaking the Appalachian State dig record last week... Spurgeon finished with 10 or more kills for the 11th time this season and the fifth time in the last six matches... Tolliver tallied double-digit kills for the 19th time this season and the 11th time in the last 11 outings.