

## Wagner, Rhein Lead Apps Past Catamounts

Written by Staff Reports

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Kelly Rhein (York, Pa./Virginia/York Catholic) and Anna Wagner (Lincoln, Neb./Florida Gulf Coast/Lincoln East) each recorded a match-high 11 kills as Appalachian State picked up its third-straight win with a 3-0 sweep of Western Carolina on Wednesday, Oct. 12 at the Holmes Center.

The Mountaineers (13-7, 5-1) stayed atop the SoCon North with their third-straight conference win while the Catamounts (8-14, 3-3) fell a full two games back on the standings. Appalachian was dominant through the first two sets as it never trailed and allowed Western Carolina to pull even just once through the first two sets.

ASU jumped out to 10-5 lead in the first set and never led by less than five the rest of the way en route to a 25-16 set victory. Wagner, who ended the deciding third set with a kill, also ended the first set with one of her 11 kills.

The second set was nearly identical to the first, though the Catamounts were unable to ever tie the set at any point. The Mountaineers jumped out to a quick 6-1 lead on back-to-back services aces from Rhein and stayed in front for another 25-16 set win.

Western Carolina did not go quietly in the final set as it rallied from a 14-10 deficit to take a 17-16 lead late in the match. The Apps rallied with three-straight points to take a 19-17 lead before the Catamounts tied it at 20-20.

Alison Blasingame (Yorktown, Va./Virginia Tech/Grafton) and Jessica Eley (Kansas City, Mo./Bishop Miege) notched back-to-back kills to give ASU a 22-20 lead en route to a 25-21 match-clinching win.

The Mountaineers hit a blistering .348 while holding the Catamounts to just .212. Blasingame finished with 10 kills on the evening while Courtney Rhein (York, Pa./Eastern York) had a match-high 20 digs. Kasey Sauls (Prairie Village, Kan./Shawnee Mission East) led all players with 29 assists and Eley had three block assists.

Appalachian State returns to action on Saturday when it plays host to Furman at 5 p.m. on Saturday before taking on Wofford at 5 p.m. on Sunday at the Holmes Center.

**MATCH NOTES:** Appalachian's 5-1 start in SoCon play is its best record through six conference matches since 2006... the 5-1 start to SoCon play is the team's best start under head coach Matt Ginipro... ASU's win on Wednesday night was its sixth-straight over Western Carolina and eighth-straight home win over the Catamounts... The Mountaineers have won 46 games against WCU all-time, the second most against a single school in program history... Courtney Rhein moved her career-dig total to 1,070... Rhein needs just 25 more digs to pass Kathy Granack for 9th all-time... Kasey Sauls pushed her career-assists total to 2,884... she needs 368 more assists to overtake Granack for fifth in ASU history... Appalachian has won five-straight home matches... the Apps are 7-1 at home this season.