

Volleyball Falls to VCU, UVa

Written by Ryan Bower

Sunday, 09 September 2012 08:38

Appalachian State University volleyball fell in both of its matches on the final day of VCU/Third Degree Sportswear Invitational on Saturday at the Stiegel Center. The Mountaineers (2-8), despite rallying after an early 2-1 deficit, dropped a 3-2 decision to VCU (8-1) before falling in three sets to Virginia (4-5).

VCU 3, App State 2

App State and VCU played perhaps the best match of the day at the VCU/Third Degree Sportswear Invitational as both teams combined to give fans a thrilling back-and-forth match throughout. The tone for the match was set early when the crowd in attendance was treated to an intense first set that featured 16 ties and five lead changes.

The Mountaineers were able to build an early 4-1 lead before the Rams battled back to jump in front by a 7-6 score. Both teams would trade jabs throughout the remainder of the set as neither was able to build a lead of more than two points.

With its back to the wall and facing elimination, Appalachian was able to stave off defeat twice before finally gaining the upper hand and finishing off the Rams in a 29-27 set victory.

VCU gained an early advantage in the second set and never trailed en route to a 25-16 victory and withstood several Mountaineer runs to take the third set by a 25-21 score.

Appalachian State roared back with a dominant third-set effort, building a lead of as many as nine points, as it cruised to a 25-14 win to draw the match even at 2-2.

The fifth and deciding set also proved to be a thriller as the teams traded the lead three times and saw the score tied on 11 occasions.

It was the Rams who would prevail in the end by an 18-16 final in the fifth set as the Mountaineers were unable to overcome several attack errors in the final stages.

Lindsey Sauls and Jacqui Spurgeon each notched 14 kills in the loss a day after setting new career-highs in a win over Georgetown. Dalton Tolliver finished with 11 kills while Lauren Gray set a career-high with 10.

Courtney Rhein (15), Paige Brown (11) and Lauren Brown (11) each tallied double-digit dig totals while P. Brown set a new career-high with 45 assists.

The Apps hit .237 as a team while limiting VCU to .216 on the attack. The Rams finished with 9.5 blocks while the Mountaineers tallied four.

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Virginia 3, App State 0

The Mountaineers were unable to rebound from an energy-draining, emotional loss in the first match of the day as they fell to Virginia in straight sets in the weekend finale.

UVa was rarely in danger as it grabbed set victories of 25-18, 25-21 and 25-20. The Cavaliers used several mid-set runs to grab the lead in each of the three sets.

Appalachian's best chance at picking up a set victory came in the third set when it held a 14-11 advantage, but Virginia rattled off six-straight points to take a lead it would not relinquish.

Gray, Spurgeon and Tolliver each notched a team-high six kills while Rhein recorded nine digs and P. Brown tallied 19 assists. The Apps hit just .070 on the attack while Virginia posted a .207 attack percentage.

The Mountaineers will return to action next weekend when they face Campbell, Toledo and Wake Forest at the 2012 Wake Forest Black & Gold Challenge.

MATCH NOTES: The Mountaineers dropped to 175-165 all-time in regular-season tournaments... the Mountaineers saw their streak of four-straight wins in five-set matches come to an end... Rhein increased her career-dig total to 1,483... she needs 346 more digs to become App State's career digs leader.

Photo Courtesy: Lauren Gray, ASU Athletics

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