

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ATHLETICS

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TECH VOLLEYBALL GEARS UP FOR REGULAR SEASON WITH SUNDAY'S GREEN AND GOLD SCRIMMAGE

RUSSELLVILLE, Arkansas – Arkansas Tech Volleyball took a break from its preseason practices Sunday afternoon and conducted a two-hour, five-game Green and Gold Scrimmage at Tucker Coliseum.

The scrimmage was the first and only major scrimmage the Golden Suns will hold before opening its 2006 season Friday against Fort Valley State at 1 p.m. in its second annual Golden Suns Spikefest.

Third-year Tech Head Coach **Kristy Kale** said that she was very unimpressed with her team's performance in Sunday's scrimmage.

"I was very unimpressed with our performance, it was very ugly and that is being kind," Kale said. "No one stepped up and grabbed the momentum, as it was an up and down affair. We've looked 10 times better in practice than we showed today and that was disappointing."

The White team consisted of Tech's top unit of players, while the Green team was the rest of the team in Sunday's scrimmage.

In the first game, the Green team won 30-19 and then took the second game, 30-20, but Kale said that despite the scores in the first two games, her team lacked intensity.

"Our intensity, our desire and fire were lacking today," Kale said. "I wish I could figure the reason for that, as our practices up to this point have been so much better."

In the third team, the White team cruised to a 30-21 win, before the Green team stepped up and responded with a 30-13 win in the fourth game, which prompted Kale to play a fifth and final game. In the fifth game, which turned out to be the most competitive of the afternoon, both teams traded the lead until the White team ended the game by scoring the final four points to post a 30-26 victory.

"We were just flat the entire afternoon and I'm at a loss for what happened," said Kale. "We need to rebound in a hurry before this coming weekend."

Tech's 2006 team returns five starters and eight letterwinners from last season's 25-12 team that finished second in the Gulf South Conference West Division with a 9-5 mark. In addition to the five returning starters, Tech has added seven freshmen to a roster that doesn't feature a senior and has only two juniors.

"I thought our freshman played well today and that was pleasing," Kale said.

Kale singled out freshmen outside hitters **Kirsten Boyd** (Russellville, Ark.) and **Natosha Saltus** (Norman, Okla.) after the match for their performance.

"Kirsten played the right side in the first game with the White team and then played outside hitter with the Green team did a nice job and showed a lot today," Kale said. "In addition, I thought Natosha was consistent throughout the entire match playing with the White team."

Boyd finished the scrimmage with 17 kills, two service aces and two assisted blocks, while Saltus had 11 kills, two aces and an assisted block.

Leading the way offensively for the Golden Suns were junior outside hitter **Rebecca Baker** (Byron Center, Mich.) and sophomore outside hitter **Racheal Urquhart** (Chatham, Ont.), who each had 19 kills and combined for 10 blocks, including four solo blocks and three service aces. In addition, freshman middle blocker **Katie Stamm** (Marysville, Mich.) had nine kills and four blocks and sophomore right side hitter **Shakira Sanders** (Fort Wayne, Ind.) had nine kills and two assisted blocks.

On the afternoon, both teams combined for 74 errors, including 40 errors by the Green team and both teams combined for nine solo blocks, 17 service aces and 25 total blocks.

Tech will return to practice for two-a-day workouts on Monday and Tuesday, before beginning their regular practice routine of once-a-day workouts on Wednesday, which is the first day of Tech's fall semester classes.

"We just need to get back to work and improve before we start our season in five days," Kale added.

In addition to playing Fort Valley State at the Golden Suns Spikefest, Tech will play Texas A&M-Commerce on Friday at 7 p.m., before playing Washburn at 11 a.m. on Saturday and concluding the tournament with a 5 p.m. match on Saturday against Drury University.

Other Tech Volleyball News:

* - Kale announced after her team's scrimmage that junior libero **Courtney Collins** (Joplin, Mo.) and sophomore setters **Kayla Allison** (Tulsa, Okla.) and **Alexis Gillett** (Jackson, Mich.) were elected as tri-captains for the 2006 season by their teammates. "I expect those three players will provide solid leadership this season for our team," Kale said.

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