

Sports Information

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday November 20, 2009
FGCU Volleyball

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Volleyball Sweeps JU, Advances to A-Sun Final

FORT MYERS, Fla. - The Florida Gulf Coast University volleyball team defeated the Jacksonville Dolphins by a score of 3-0 (29-27, 26-24, and 25-18) to advance to the championship game of the Atlantic Sun Conference tournament. The Eagles are one win away from the program's first ever Division I NCAA tournament appearance.

"We did little things like playing defense and showing some heart, scrapping, scrapping, and fighting- it's a really rewarding way to win a match," Head coach Dave Nichols said.

Jacqueline Cowden and Jelena Simic each recorded 10 kills, while Chandra Lefever had 46 assists and four kills to lead the way for the Eagles.

After falling behind early in the first set by a score of 3-1, the Eagles battled back and went on a 12-2 run to build an 13-5 lead. After being down by as many as seven points, JU battled back to cut the lead to 18-15 later in the set. Following a service error by Chandra Lefever (Fort Morgan, Col.) and a kill by Aidan Yeager, the Dolphins battled back to tie the score at 22 apiece. After having JU at set point at 24-23, the Eagles let the lead slip away and found themselves trailing 24-23. However, Jelena Simic (Lazarevac, Serbia) kept the Eagles alive on numerous occasions with three consecutive kills, while Lefever and Lara Metz (Land O'Lakes, Fla.) came through with back-to-back kills to take the first set in thrilling fashion by a score of 29-27. Simic led the way for the Eagles with 10 kills.

Both squads went point-for-point early in the second set, but after back-to-back kills from Lefever and Jacqueline Cowden (Danville, Calif.), the Eagles found themselves up by a score of 9-7. FGCU would keep that two-point advantage heading into the midpoint of the match until JU got two straight points to tie the score at 14. After a kill by Brooke Singleton, the Dolphins had their first lead of the set at 16-15. Following three consecutive points by JU, the Eagles saw themselves down by a score of 20-17. The Blue and Green answered and took three straight points later in the set to take a 23-22 lead thanks in part to two attack errors by the Dolphins.

Back-to-back kills by Cowden led to an exciting second set win (26-24).

The third set was similar to the first two as it was closely contested and points traded throughout. The Eagles were down as many as two points early on but after kills by senior Ashley Yance (Fort Myers, Fla.) and Anna Wagner (Lincoln, Neb.) the Eagles took a 13-12 lead. A combo block by Cowden and freshman Julia Lopez (El Paso, Texas) gave FGCU their biggest lead of the set at 17-14, swinging the momentum heavily in the favor of the Blue and Green. The Eagles rode that momentum and knocked off the Dolphins in the third and final set by a score of 25-18.

The Eagles will take on Lipscomb University tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. in championship match of the A-Sun Tournament at Alico Arena. The winner earns an automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament.