

Murphy Triple-Double Leads No. 10/12 Volleyball Past Mississippi State

Starkville, MS - Sunday November 1, 2009

Sophomore Florida right-side/setter **Kelly Murphy** (Wilmington, Ill.) registered her seventh triple-double of the season and her second consecutive in a three-set sweep, as the No. 10/12 Gators defeated Mississippi State in a hard-fought 3-0 (25-23, 27-25, 25-22) match on Sunday afternoon in the Newell-Grissom Building in Starkville, Miss.



The Gators (18-3, 12-2 Southeastern Conference) have now posted six consecutive sweeps of SEC opponents. Florida won the blocking battle 8.0-7.0 and out-dug Mississippi State 65-62 in a match that featured six ties and nine lead changes.

"We fully expected Mississippi State to play well coming off their big win on Friday night," Florida head coach **Mary Wise** said. "They did just that by playing lights-out defense and low-error volleyball. A 3-0 win this year is even more difficult to achieve. I thought our team's play, down 23-18 in the second set, showed a lot of guts."

Murphy's second consecutive triple-double came via 11 kills on .320 hitting with 25 assists and 10 digs to complement three blocks for 12.5 points. She broke her own school single-season record in triple-doubles with seven and now has a school-record-setting 13 for her career. Murphy leads all NCAA Division I players so far this year with seven triple-dips and notched back-to-back triple-doubles for the second time in her career.

Four Florida players recorded double-figure kills as junior right-side **Lauren Bledsoe** (Long Beach, Calif.) tallied 11 kills on 14 swings with no errors for an impressive .786 hitting efficiency. Sophomore outside hitter **Colleen Ward** (Naperville, Ill.) charted her third triple-double of the season with 11 kills and 11 digs for a match-high 14.5 points. Ward also had a career-high-tying three service aces in the contest.

Sophomore outside hitter **Kristy Jaeckel** (Littleton, Colo.) recorded her seventh double-double of the season with 10 kills and 13 digs for 11.5 points.

Senior libero **Elyse Cusack** (Melrose, Fla.) was one of four Gators who also recorded double-figure digs, as she posted a team-high 14 scoops. Cusack now has 1,958 digs for her career, which ranks third all-time in SEC history.

Junior setter **Brynja Rodgers** (Iowa City, Iowa) dished out 14 assists and posted two service aces, while sophomore middle blocker **Cassandra Anderson** (Bakersfield, Calif.) charted a team-high four blocks, marking the 13th time this season she has recorded four or more rejections in a single match. Senior middle blocker **Kristina Johnson** (Indianapolis, Ind.) tied for match-high honors with four blocks.

Mississippi State opened the first set with a 7-5 advantage following two kills on three plays by Faith Steinwedell. From there, a **Callie Rivers** (Winter Park, Fla.) kill sparked a 3-0 run that was highlighted by a Rodgers ace and put the Gators ahead 8-7. Following five ties, the Bulldogs' Ioana Demian and Caitlin Rance registered back-to-back kills to put Mississippi State ahead 14-12. Florida rallied to tie the score at 16-16 after a block by Johnson and Rivers on the outside and a kill by Jaeckel off the block, but the Bulldogs pushed their lead back out to two, 18-16, heading into a Florida timeout.

The Gators then put together a 4-1 run that was capped off by a kill by Anderson on an overpass that caused a Mississippi State timeout with Florida ahead 20-19. The two teams then began trading points the rest of the way until a Bledsoe kill and a net violation against the Bulldogs gave Mississippi State the 25-23 victory. Florida hit .391 in the opening frame led by Jaeckel's six kills.

Florida raced to a 4-0 advantage in the second set, capped off by a pair of aces by Ward that forced an MSU timeout. Out of the break, the Bulldogs recorded back-to-back kills before the Gators rallied with two points of their own, including a resounding block by Jaeckel and Johnson, to go ahead 6-2. Florida extended its advantage out to 10-6 following a kill by Murphy and a block solo by Anderson on successive plays. From there, Mississippi State ran off four consecutive points to tie the score at 10-10 and force Wise to use a timeout. The Bulldogs continued that rally out of the break and, by the time it was finished, it was a nine-point scoring spree that put them ahead 15-10.

Florida cut within three, 15-12, after a Ward kill and a Mississippi State attack error. From there, the Bulldogs kept adding to their advantage to go up 19-14 on a Rivers attack error heading into a UF timeout. Mississippi State rolled to a 22-15 lead before a kill from Bledsoe and an ace by Rodgers stopped the Bulldogs' scoring spree. With the Gators trailing 23-17, Murphy recorded a kill and State committed an attack error to bring Florida within four, 23-19, heading into an MSU timeout. The Gators then used a 5-1 run to knot the score at 24-all on a kill by Ward. After another tie at 25-all, an attack error by Ashley Newsome and a block by Anderson and Ward sealed the 27-25 comeback win for Florida in the second set.

The Gators broke to a 3-0 advantage in the first set and extended their advantage to 6-2 following a kill by Murphy and a powerful block by Johnson and Murphy on consecutive plays. With Florida ahead 7-3, the Bulldogs ran off three points in a row to cut within one, 7-6. Mississippi State managed to knot the score at 8-8, but Anderson had a kill and the Bulldogs committed an attack error to give the Gators a 10-8 lead. The two teams continued to battle closely with neither team taking more than a three-point advantage.

Ahead 15-14, Florida ran off three in a row to go up 18-14 on a kill by Murphy that forced a Mississippi State timeout. The Bulldogs then rallied to cut within one, 18-17, but Murphy and Ward followed with back-to-back put-downs to put the Gators in front 20-17. Mississippi State used a 4-1 run to knot the score at 21-all on a ball-handling error against Murphy. The two teams kept fighting until a kill by Bledsoe and an attack error by MSU's Rance closed out the 25-22 third-set win.

Mississippi State (6-19, 2-13 SEC) was led by Demian's match-high 12 kills. Libero Kayla Woodard added a squad-best 23 digs.

Florida returns to action on Friday when it returns home to play host to Georgia. Opening serve is slated for 7 p.m. ET and the match will be carried live on WRUF-AM 850 with Tom Collett and Missy Whittemore.

For all of the latest information on Florida Volleyball, please log on to www.GatorZone.com/volleyball. Follow the Gators on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GatorZoneVB and Coach Mary Wise on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GatorMary.

The University of Florida is home to the 2009 NCAA Volleyball Regional. For ticket information, log on to www.GatorZone.com/tickets.

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