



Lyle Gramberg

Minnesota State's Dana Ostertag (6) slides a spike between the arms of Augustana's Rebecca Hindman during Saturday's volleyball match at Bresnan Arena.

Mavericks 'let it get away'

Augustana takes final two games to complete 3-2 win

By Chad Courrier
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — Minnesota State was coming off a thrilling 33-31 victory in Game 3 of Saturday's match against Augustana, and the momentum was clearly on the Mavericks' side.

But Augustana rallied to take the final two games and win the North Central Conference match at Bresnan Arena.

Game scores were 30-24, 15-30, 31-33, 30-24, 15-10.

"It's all about what you do after 25," Minnesota State coach Dennis Amundson said. "You want to start with intensity, pay attention and keep it close in the middle, then have your players make big plays at the end. We're still working on (finishing games)."

The Mavericks seemed to dominate the stat sheet, with

more kills, more blocks, more digs and a better attack percentage. But Augustana was the winner by playing better at the end of games.

"It's disappointing because in two of our losses, we out-dug them and out-hit them," Mavericks junior hitter Ashley Nachreiner said. "It's really frustrating."

Augustana (13-4, 3-1 in NCC) led for most of the first game, though the Mavericks used a five-point run with Nachreiner serving, to lead briefly at 12-11. The Vikings scored the next six points, and the Mavericks couldn't get closer than two points the rest of the way, losing 30-24. Amanda Beekman had five kills and two blocks in the game, and Dana Ostertag added four kills.

Megan Stroud had three straight kills to help the Mavericks take a 9-2 lead in

the second game, and she had a couple more to make it 12-5. Minnesota State maintained its comfortable lead throughout as Nachreiner had kills on the final four points of a 30-15 victory.

Krissy Timmer served the Mavericks to a 5-1 lead in Game 3, but the Vikings used a 9-3 run to grab the lead. Nachreiner made a couple of kills to start a comeback, and the match was tied 21, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31. Finally, Nachreiner blasted her sixth kill and Danielle Zimmermann ended the game with a block for a 33-31 victory.

In the fourth game, Augustana used a 7-1 run to open the gap to 26-18. Nachreiner had six kills, but the Mavericks generated little offense from the others until a final push. Beekman and Stroud each had a kill and block to get within 27-23, but the Vikings finished the game at 30-24.

The Mavericks went down 7-2 in the deciding game, and despite two kills each by

Nachreiner and Beekman, the Vikings finished the match at 15-10.

"We just let it get away," said Nachreiner, who had a match-high 26 kills. "We'd make mistakes and dwell on them too long."

Beekman had 16 kills, Stroud finished with 15 and Zimmermann had 13 as the Mavericks' 82 kills was more than Augustana's 66. The Mavericks had a .206 attack percentage to Augustana's .156, with a 124-108 advantage in digs. Stef Sandstrom, who had 62 assists, made 31 digs, and Kelly Sandstrom had 29.

Minnesota State (12-3, 2-1), which has lost two matches after winning seven straight, has a nonconference match at Winona State on Tuesday.

"The kids will respond, we'll get back to practice and keep working," Amundson said. "When you face adversity, you see what you've got. We've faced more adversity in matches than we did tonight."