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Sports



MSU's Megan Stroud (left) had a key kill in Game 2 of the Mavericks win over North Dakota. She finished with seven kills. Danielle Zimmermann finished with a team-high eight blocks.

MSU regroups, downs UND

By Chris Jagerson
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — With the prospects of North Dakota tying up the match at 1, Minnesota State coach Dennis Amundson called a timeout late in the second game to refocus his squad.

"They weren't playing as a unit," Amundson said. "You could sense that uneasiness. They were starting to look around at each other to see who was going to do what. That was it."

Senior Megan Stroud listened and, following the timeout, took things upon herself to finish the game.

The Mavericks rallied, and Stroud had the game-winning kill to help her team take the first two games on their way to a 3-0 victory in their home-opener and North Central Conference opener Friday night at Bresnan Arena.

Game scores were 30-20, 31-29, 30-21.

"It was good for us to take a breather and realize we could do better," Stroud said. "We kind of had a fresh start and went back out and finished."

The Mavericks went ahead 25-22 in a sloppy second game before North Dakota scored four straight points, forcing MSU to take the timeout. Danielle Zimmermann followed with an ace tip and eventually the Mavericks went ahead 29-27 before the Sioux tied it. North Dakota sent the next point wide and Stroud's

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kill finished the game.

"I just wanted to get that game over with so I put it away," said Stroud, who finished with a game-high 13 kills to go with five blocks.

The Mavericks got the serve back at 21-19 in Game 1 when Kelly Sandstrom reeled off eight straight service points to just about put the game away. North Dakota got the serve back but sent the next point wide.

Zimmermann had three kills and six blocks in the final game to help the Mavericks finish the match.

"We wanted to serve a little tougher to get them out of their system," Amundson said. "We felt we had to take away their slide, and, in the close game in Game 2, we didn't take it away so well. They scored and that made a big difference. In the third game we were able to contain it a little better."

Ashley Nachreiner had nine kills, 12 digs and three ace serves, and Stef Sandstrom had 32 set assists and 11 digs in the victory. Zimmermann finished with seven kills and a team-high eight blocks, and Amanda Beekman had seven kills.

"We've gotten very good at finishing games," Stroud said. "We've worked really hard on that at practice so we're good when it's tight and finish hard."

The No. 23-ranked Mavericks (11-1, 1-0 in NCC) play at 5 p.m. today against No. 14 Nebraska-Omaha at Bresnan Arena.

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