

Stanford up for volleyball title

BY SAMUEL MCKEWON
Senior staff writer

“But when Arizona is on they're as good as any team in the nation.”

DON SHAW
Texas volleyball coach

It's been a night-to-night grind for Stanford's Kerri Walsh for three years.

The two-time Pacific 10 Conference player of the year has battled a shoulder injury for the majority of her career. It started to plague her after a solid freshman season and hasn't stopped since.

"I've had to deal with it my whole career at Stanford," Walsh said. "My career would have been so much different if I had a better shoulder. But it's made me a better player."

And the addition of freshman outside hitter Logan Tom made Stanford a better team, Walsh said.

Tom has graced the cover of Sports Illustrated for Women and is wisely considered to be one of the best junior volleyball players in history.

She has already competed with the U.S. National Team. This season, she took pressure off Walsh, helping lead the Cardinals to a 28-2 record so far this season.

Tom averages 4.57 kills per game and is hitting .323 this season. Walsh, on the other hand, comes with a more all-around game, hitting .365, averaging 3.2 kills per game and 1.32 blocks.

With Tom in the lineup, Stanford has already made it further in the tournament than it did last year, when it was upset by Texas. Cardinal Coach Don Shaw, who has won four national titles in the 1990s, said Stanford was too "banged up" to beat many teams last year.

Enter Tom and a new, more effective role for Walsh, who didn't have to take as many swings.

"It was good from the get-go," Walsh said of the 1999 team. "We were missing Logan Tom last year.

We were missing the big hitter. Now that we have that, we're much bigger and much harder to stop."

The Cardinals dropped a game in their second round match against Santa Clara, but Shaw wasn't too concerned.

Stanford is still a young team that has had some injuries this season, which forced chemistry to happen a little later than usual. The chemistry is there now as the Cardinals face Arizona in the third round of the tournament.

Shaw thinks the Wildcats, who upset Texas to make it to the third round, will make for a tough opponent.

Already Stanford has disposed of UA twice, sweeping the Cats both times.

"But when Arizona is on," Shaw said, "they're as good as any team in the nation."

The coach says the same about his own team. While Shaw said there are "six or seven" teams capable of winning the national title, No. 2 Stanford was high on the list, mostly in part to strong leadership from Walsh, whom Shaw called one of the tougher players he's ever coached.

"I think at this point Kerri looks at it and says, 'we have two weeks to go.' If we have to detach her arm when she's done in order to make it through, she's willing to pay that price."

Pro athletes implicated in strip club investigation

NEW YORK (AP) — An Atlanta strip club linked to organized crime provided thousands of dollars' worth of strippers and alcohol to professional athletes including Patrick Ewing, Dennis Rodman and Charles Oakley, the Daily News of New York reported Tuesday.

The Gold Club allegedly gave the athletes phony money called "Gold Bucks" that it normally sells to patrons so they can give them to strippers or rent a private VIP room, the Daily News said. It added that athletes also got free drinks.

The newspaper quoted unidentified federal sources and investigative records as saying that during five nights in April 1998, "Patrick Ewing and friends" ran up a bill of \$2,233, including a \$991 tab in a single night at the club.

Oakley, who left the New York

Knicks in June 1998 and now plays for Toronto, paid \$1,313 and \$665 on two nights in June 1997, while Rodman paid \$411, \$516, \$786, \$895, \$926, and \$946 in Gold Bucks during visits from 1995 to 1998, the newspaper said.

Steven Kaplan, owner of the Gold Club, and 14 other defendants were indicted Nov. 4 on charges including prostitution, racketeering, money-laundering, loan-sharking and credit-card fraud. They have pleaded innocent.

No athletes were named in the indictment and none faces allegations of wrongdoing. NBA spokesman Brian McIntyre said the league was monitoring developments.

Lori Hamamoto, a spokeswoman for the Knicks, said the club would have no comment. Calls Tuesday to agents for Ewing, Rodman and Oakley were not immediately returned.

Big 12 Notebook

The Big 12 is a combined 53-13 up to this point in the season. The league's highest non-conference winning percentage is in jeopardy at 76.8 percent. The 1999 campaign has produced an 80.3 percentage after being 65.8 last season.

Iowa State senior Marcus Fizer was named the Big 12 Player of the Week after being named the MVP of the Norwest Cyclone Challenge. Fizer led the Cyclones to the championship while averaging 25.5 points and 10 rebounds per game.

Sophomore Chris Owens of Texas was named the Big 12 Rookie of the Week. Owens scored 19 points and grabbed 11 rebounds in the Longhorns 88-81 loss against No. 2 Arizona. He is UT's third leading scorer, averaging 14.2 per game and second in rebounding, with a 6.8 average.

Last week's Rookie of the Week, Baylor forward Terry Black, is averaging 18.6 points and 13.8 rebounds for the Bears. Black is also No. 1 on the team in steals (3.2) and No. 3 in assists (3.2).

Kansas, coming off a 97-77 victory over Middle Tennessee State, will be in Chicago for the Great Eight Tournament. KU will face off against Michigan State Tuesday night. The tournament includes teams from last year's NCAA tournament that made it to the final eight. It will include six of the top seven teams in the country, excluding No. 18 Temple and No. 24 Gonzaga.

Oklahoma State continued its hot start behind solid guard play and the surprise start of Brian Montanoti. Montanoti, a 6-foot-9 senior, is averaging 12.7 points and 9.8 rebounds to complement leading scorer Desmond Mason (18.7). Point guard Doug Gottlieb has a 4.1 to 1 assist to turnover ratio with 70 assists in six games.

Kansas, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State remain 6-0 in the non-conference season, while Nebraska (3-3) and Texas A&M (2-2) round out the cellar at .500 with five of the conference's 13 losses.

Notebook compiled by staff writer Joshua Camenzind.

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