

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Returning Serve:** Union Volleyball gives help to LSU Volleyball team.
- **Union loses a tough match to Freed**
- **Union bounces back.**
- **Returning Serve:** Former Team-mates reunite.
- **Players of the week.**

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Returning Serve: Union volleyball program takes opportunity to help storm-displaced LSU team

A storm rolls through a town, causing destruction to homes, businesses, and a college campus. Parts of the campus sustained major damage, while other areas of the campus serve as hospitals, command centers, and shelters.

Sound familiar?

No, this is not a revisit to the events of the February 5 tornado that came through Jackson and Union University's campus.

This is the situation that faced the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge following Hurricane Gustav. And in this instance, the LSU volleyball team is the focus.

The following is the story of how two volleyball programs are now connected by more than just the sport they play.

After playing on the road in Omaha, Neb. for their season-opening tournament, the LSU volleyball team found themselves a long way from home. With many parts of their campus still without power, and travel to the area restricted, the team had been asked to

stay away for a few days.

As they started their trip home from Nebraska, the team was also informed that the volleyball tournament scheduled in the Pete Maravich Assembly Center that weekend had been cancelled. The Maravich Center, which is the home court for the LSU volleyball and basketball teams, was serving as a makeshift hospital for victims of the hurricane.



Head Coach Fran Flory needed a place to sit and wait for the word to return home.

Flory didn't have to look far. Assistant Coach Steve Loeswick's father lives in Lexington, Tenn. After settling down at the Loeswick home in Lexington, the coaches began to contact area schools in search of practice facilities. After all, the No. 21 ranked NCAA DI volleyball team already begun play this season, and where in the process of looking for matches to replace

the ones lost from their home-opening tournament.

Steven Gream, the head coach for the Union University volleyball team, got the email request on Monday morning. After getting approval, Gream called Wilson to set up practice times. The LSU team worked out more than two hours at Union's Fred DeLay Gymnasium on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"This was an opportunity for us as a school and team to help others that are going through some of the same things that we did just a few months ago", Gream said. "The community has been so gracious to our university in the recent months, and we want to take advantage of opportunities to return the favor to others in need."

"This is one of those opportunities," said Gream.

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Lady Bulldog Volleyball team celebrates after a big kill.

When asked about the most important things she can do when going through times such as these, Flory responded, "We want to make sure everyone knows we are safe, and to keep the group together." Flory believes the teams should remain together, especially during the season. And she extended gratitude to the families of her team that understand her decision to keep the team together during this time.

"I'm a person that likes to be prepared for what is ahead," said Flory. "I don't keep secrets from my team. We talk openly about what we have to face, and then it is up to us to decide to be afraid or to accept the challenge."

The 2008 LSU volleyball team has chosen the latter. "I'm amazed at how well the kids have done and how close they have become during this time", said Flory. "When you are cramped on the bus and in a house together for this amount of time, your character is tested. Their character has become stronger through this challenge."

For Coach Gream and the Union volleyball play-

ers, this also provided an opportunity to see a nationally ranked NCAA DI team practice in their own gym.

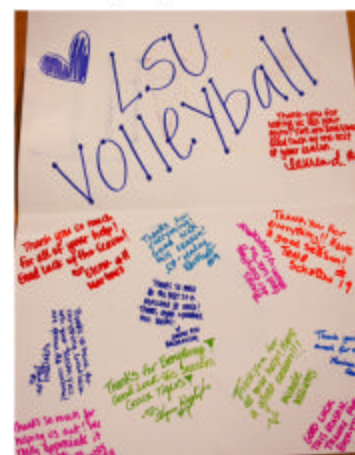
"As a coach, I want to learn from others," said Gream. "I watch things like their drills to see what I can add to our practices. This lets me see the drills in person, rather than having to watch drills on video or to read about drills in coaching materials."

Gream adds, "Coach Flory and the LSU staff and players have gone out of their way to say thanks for the use of the facilities." Not only did the purple and gold clad visitors from Louisiana extend kind words on numerous occasions, the players presented a large 'Thank You!' card to the Union team as they left Jackson on Wednesday afternoon. The card was created by the LSU players with a personal message from each member of the team.

Pictured right: Ashley Young and former High School Teammate Lauren DeCivolamo who plays for LSU, Thank you card from LSU Team, LSU practicing at Union, and Coach Fran Flory from LSU



Union's Ashley Young & LSU's Lauren DeCivolamo



LSU head coach, Fran Flory (right)



Emilie Ogas and Anna Sims go up for a block against Bethel's Jessica Vieira.

Photo courtesy of Katie Morgan

Union loses a tough match to rival FHU

September 23, 2008 - The Union University Lady Bulldog rally at Freed-Hardeman (Tenn.) University fell just short in a 3-2 (25-15, 25-21, 17-25, 19-25, 15-5) loss. Union dropped to 8-4 overall and 4-2 in conference play. The Lady Lions remained perfect on the season at 13-0 overall and 4-0 in the Tran-South.

Union fell behind two games to none, before using eight straight points to fuel a rally in game three. Union held the momentum into game

four as the Lady Bulldogs forced a deciding game five against the undefeated Lady Lions.

This marked the first time all season that Freed-Hardeman had been pushed to five games.

However, the home Lady Lions quickly stopped the Union rally with a 15-5 win in the fifth game.

Up next for Union will be four matches in the Cumberland

(Tenn.) University Tournament the weekend, September 26 and 27.

Currently Union is in second place behind Freed with a rematch being on Senior Night November 3 and possibly the conference tournament.

Pictured: Emilie Ogas blocks against Freed's Crissandra Perez.



Union Goes on 7 Match Tear

Following the tough 5 game match against Freed-Hardeman University, the Lady Bulldogs went on to the Cumberland Tournament to play the Host Cumberland University, Brescia University, Pikeville College, and University of the Cumberlands. They bounced back wonderfully with them not only winning all 4 matches and the tournament, but also not losing one game going 3-0 in all 4 matches. Union, in addition to winning the tournament, also had 4 players win all-tournament honors. Coaches were informed to nominate players from their team and their opponent's teams after each match. The lady bulldogs got 4 players who made all tournament team—Katie Adams (named Tournament MVP), Emilie Ogas, CJ Neathamers, and Amanda Coyle and were the top 4 players voted in the tournament.

Following the tournament, began another tough week with the team facing 3 tough TranSouth Conference teams in Trevecca Nazarene University, Bethel College, and Lyon College. They started with TNU with a 3-0 victory against a tough team that gave the team fits last year. Union was led by Emilie Ogas with 11 kills. Followed by Amanda Coyle with nine, Anna Sims with eight, and Heather Lieberman with seven kills. Katie Adams, the reigning TranSouth Player of the Week, recorded 37 assists. Lindsey Wallach added two aces, while CJ Neathamers led with 22 digs. Five Union players each tallied one block each. The lady bulldogs then went on to play a tough Bethel College team and defeated them in a tough 5 game match 3-2. Bethel dropped to 7-5 on the season and 4-2 in league play. Bethel jumped out early in the first game, but Union was able to take the next two games by 11 and 8 points respectively. Bethel answered the bell with a win in the fourth game. But Union edged Bethel in game five for the match-clinching win. To this point in the season, Union remains the only team in the TranSouth to defeat the Lady Wildcats of Bethel. Union took the earlier meeting 3-1 at Union on September 13. However, this win did not come without a price, Outside Hitter Heather Lieberman suffered an ankle injury in game 3 but the team pulled through with the victory. The last team left for the perfect week was to face Lyon College who pulled out a shocking 5 game win over Union on their home court with the Lady Bulldogs serving for match point 3 times in the match. The Lady Bulldogs rose to the occasion with a new line-up and only one practice to work on it and won a tough 5 game match that ended with a 20-18 win in the 5th game. For Union, this marks their seventh straight win. The seven wins in a row is the longest streak since Union had winning streaks of seven and 11 matches during the 2006 season.

Returning Serve: Two former Teammates re-unite due to Gustav

Connections through volleyball and recent storms wasn't all that linked Union and LSU together, another connection surfaced between the two teams. Union's Ashley Young and LSU's Lauren DeCivolamo were teammates at Belleville (Ill.) West High School.

"I knew that Lauren was at LSU and when coach told us that they would be practicing in our gym, I immediately thought of seeing her for the first time since high school," Young said smiling.

The two led their high school team to a third place finish in the Illinois AA State Tournament back in 2005. That team from Belleville West has eight players that have played or are currently playing college volleyball.

Young was also watching the LSU practice with more in mind than just her high school friend. "It all comes down to fundamentals," stated Young. "It's nice to see that they have to work on many of the same struggles that we practice every day."

And while Young was thinking about her high school teammate and what she was dealing with this week, she responded about how her road to Union was affected by the February 5 tornado.

Young was not on Union's campus during the tornado, but had already begun the recruiting process with Union's Coach Gream. "I was supposed to visit the campus the week of February 5, but coach called and said we would have to reschedule the visit."

Many players might have moved on to other opportunities, but not Young.

"I saw the destruction that took place on the campus. I then noticed from a distance how the campus came together to help each other through the days and weeks to follow."

One instance sticks out in her mind.

"Once I finally made my visit to Union, I saw how the players that were staying off campus came to the aid of the players that were in the dorms. I really liked how the girls proved their care for each other, despite it being the off-season for volleyball."

As their Wednesday afternoon practice ended, the LSU staff and players prepared to hit the road. Once they left Jackson, the LSU team returned home briefly and then played in a tournament set up at the last minute for teams in the same situation.

Now it is the LSU campus that has been affected by a storm.

The time that Coach Gream and Coach Flory spent talking during these few days was filled with experiences of the two storms. Gream recalls, "We talked about how we've both been through struggles, some similar, and some different. However, the outpouring of support from our respective communities and others across the country will never be forgotten. "

Numerous memories and stories were brought back to the front during those two days for both Union and LSU volleyball programs. Those two days will be another memory that the players and coaches from both teams will not soon forget.

Union Boasts 3 TranSouth Players of the Week on the Season.

The TranSouth Conference awards the player of the week award to an athlete for the previous weeks accomplishments. The circumstances for the award is as follows:

1. Team must have played at least one match in the previous week.
2. A Team's record during a week adds weight to a player from that team winning the award
3. The nomination for the award comes from the Sports Information Director (SID) (not the coach) of each team in the conference. The nomination is sent to the Volleyball Conference SID who then looks at the records for the week, teams played during the week, stats, etc for each player and then comes up with the Player of the Week.

Anna Sims - **September 15, 2008** - Union University's [Anna Sims](#) has been selected as the TranSouth Athletic Conference Volleyball Player of the Week for the week ending Sept. 14, 2008.

Sims, a 5-foot-11 freshman middle hitter from Trussville, Ala., collected 26 kills and had nine blocks in a 3-0 week for the Bulldogs. The freshman also served 94 percent and earned a .440 kill percentage in Union's wins over Martin Methodist (Tenn.) College, Lambuth (Tenn.) University and Bethel (Tenn.) College. At the time, Sims was second on the team with 73 kills and lead the way with 27 blocks.



**Anna
Sims**



**Katie
Adams**



**Amanda
Hutchison
Coyle**

Katie Adams —**September 29, 2008** - Union University's [Katie Adams](#) has been named the TranSouth Conference Volleyball Player of the Week for the week ending September 28, 2008. Adams, a 5-foot-8 junior setter from Orange, Calif., led the Lady Bulldogs to the Cumberland University Invitational tournament championship and was named the tournament MVP. The 5-8 junior had 183 assists and 46 digs in 11 games played this week. Adams also notched 11 kills and had 20 aces. Thanks to Adams' efforts, the Lady Bulldogs were 4-1 this week, with their lone loss coming to TranSouth front-runner Freed-Hardeman (14-0) in a five-game match.

Amanda Hutchison Coyle— Union University's Amanda Coyle has been named TranSouth Conference Volleyball Player of the Week for the week ending Oct. 5, 2008. Coyle, a 5-9 senior middle hitter from Jackson, Tenn., had 44 kills, 21 digs, 5 blocks and had a .494 kill percentage during a 3-0 week for Union. Coyle's performance this week moved the senior into third place on Union's all-time kills list with 1,632 kills. Union is currently 15-4 this season and picked up big wins over Trevecca Nazarene, Bethel College and Lyon College this week.

#TRANSOUTH#