

http://www.nicholsonstudentmedia.com/sports/fsu-serves-ucf-its-first-loss-of-the-season/article_f060dd22-6c8c-11e6-80fa-53c0a83870f0.html

<

PREVIOUS

UCF volleyball sets precedent with tournament win

>

FSU serves UCF its first loss of the season

Tim Briggs Aug 27, 2016



Christopher Bobo

Left to right: UCF volleyball players Miranda Watkins, Jale Hervey, Jordan Pingel and Kia Bright await a serve during the Knights' three-to-none (25-23, 25-23, 25-13) loss to FSU on Saturday at The Venue.

After an optimistic first day of the 2016 season, which saw UCF volleyball improve to 2-0 with wins over Stony Brook and Kent State, the team saw an opportunity to establish an early-season signature win against No. 17-ranked Florida State.

However, the Seminoles proved their worth and established themselves as one of the most balanced, athletic and talented teams in the country with a straight-sets (25-23, 25-23, 25-13) victory over the Knights on Saturday.

"I think going into this match Florida State was No. 17, but I actually think they're a top-10 caliber team," UCF head coach Todd Dagenais said. "There's just no seams to hit through and you can't hit over them."

Despite being swept three games-to-none, UCF showed a good ability to execute kills offensively in the first two sets. The Knights actually had 40 kills in the match opposed to the Seminoles 37, but the difference was in the blocking.

With such a physically dominant front line, as well as various arrays of double block looks, UCF found it difficult to find any open lane to strike.

FSU sports ten players over six feet tall, which includes every outside hitter. The two primary outside hitters for UCF, Kia Bright and Jale Hervey, are just 5'11 each.

FSU finished with 19 blocks in the match, while UCF managed four.

"They're a really good blocking team in general," redshirt junior Taylor Wickey said. "It showed a lot of chemistry to be able to play with them. Being this early in the season we know we aren't where we need to be yet, but knowing that we can play with a top team like that is pretty awesome."

Wickey finished the match with five kills while hitting at a .333 clip. She led the Knights in hitting percentage in 2015.

Along with Wickey, Bright was an explosive bright spot for the Knights as she executed 11 kills and 11 digs in the match. The Starke, Florida, native led the Knights with 11.5 points.

UCF found themselves tied with FSU at 23 in both the first and second sets. Despite being swept, the team can take away that they battled and competed with one of the nation's top teams, and were at times just a couple points away.

"We're just a fraction of what we're going to be in a few weeks, so to be able to push them as far as we did the first two sets is something to build on." Dagenais said. "When you go against a team that is so physically dominant over you, which they are in every single position, it makes it tough.

They have experience, they have size and they've been deep in the NCAA tournament. We just ran into a team that's pretty dang good and is going to have a heck of a season."

UCF will cap off the Holiday Inn Orlando East/UCF Invitational against Stetson at 7 p.m. Saturday.