Southern Arkansas University  
2007 Lady Mulerider Volleyball Preview

Last year ushered in a new beginning for the Southern Arkansas University volleyball team as former SAU standout Brooke (Bowling) White returned as head coach.

A youth-laden team the past few seasons, the Lady Muleriders posted a 9-16 overall and 2-10 Gulf South Conference (GSC) record in 2006, with just one senior on the squad. White will counter all that inexperience this year with a 15-person team, led by five seniors. She also recruited three junior transfers to combine with two already on the team to give her a total of 10 upperclassmen. Rounding out the squad are one sophomore, a red-shirt freshman, and three incoming freshmen. Recruiting not only for this year, but the future as well, White will field a competitive team with plenty of depth.

Returnees include seniors Kristina Daily, Shelly Jones, Jessica Sutten, Andrea Spradlin, and Kayli Kerr, juniors Mallory McKee and Sarah Bell, and sophomore Shai Hinojosa. Maggie Ross also provides some returning depth, joining the squad as a red-shirt freshman after suffering a season-ending injury at the beginning of last season.

A Second Team All-GSC selection last year, Daily highlights the returnees in both talent and leadership. A 5-9 middle blocker from Houston (Cypress Falls HS), Texas, she led last year’s team with 3.18 kills per game and 362 points. Strong at the net, Daily also averaged 0.71 blocks per game. “Kristina is a solid player with a great vertical,” said White, “she worked hard during the spring and will be an asset on the court.”

Jones, a 5-8 outside hitter out of Austin (Lockhart HS), Texas, knocked down 2.44 kills per game and was strong defensively with 4.21 digs per game in 2006. “Shelly is a good all-around player who had to focus her spring work on passing and defense because of a shoulder injury,” stated White. “This has helped her total game to become even stronger.”

A 5-10 right side hitter from Houston (Navarro College), Sutten posted 1.76 kills and 0.58 blocks per game in her first season at Southern Arkansas. White says that Sutten is a burst of energy on the floor, “She’s a lefty that brings a strong block and gives us so many options on the court.”

Spradlin, a 5-6 setter/defensive specialist out of Dallas (Creekview HS), Texas, and Kerr, a 5-7 setter from Houston (Lee College), platooned at setter last year, averaging 11.45 assists between them. “Andrea is one of the hardest workers on the team,” said White, “she will do whatever is needed to get the job done and is a great leader by example.” “Kayli brings a lot of knowledge to the court for us,” added White.

A 5-9 middle blocker from Waxahachie, Texas, and is completely recovered from her injury. “It was really exciting to see her play during the spring and I believe she’ll bring great things to the floor for us,” stated White. Connor will add immediate help and depth to this season’s squad, including three from the junior college ranks, seniors Cristina Correa, Veronica Ogbeide, and Kourtney Neal, and three from the high school ranks, Emma Geyer, Taylor Rollins, and Kaci Matthews.

Correa is a 5-10 middle blocker/outside hitter out of Houston, who transfers in from Division I DePaul University, Ogbeide is a 5-10 middle blocker/outside hitter from Hurst, Texas (Tyler Jr. College), and Neal is a 5-7 setter/defensive specialist out of Mineola, Texas (Seminole State (Okla.) College). White relishes the game experience that all three will provide, “Cristina is a vocal leader…Veronica brings an “I will” attitude and should be a strong blocker for us…and Kourtney will add depth to both our defense and setting.”

Geyer is a 5-8 outside hitter/defensive specialist from Aledo, Texas, Rollins is a 5-9 outside hitter/middle blocker out of Katy (Mortan Ranch HS), Texas, and Matthews is a 5-8 outside hitter from Houston (James E. Taylor HS). Geyer brings a great work ethic and love for the game that will add a spark to the team, Rollins has a strong arm swing, and Matthews is a player that can be put anywhere on the court and play.

“I’m really excited about the upcoming season,” White stated. “Our returnees worked extremely hard in the spring and I’m looking forward to what our new players will bring.” “We should be an exciting team to watch this season and we’re working together to build a strong program.”