

Silva Unstoppable as Seward Wins Two in Lamar

It has been a long and hard road back for Seward County redshirt sophomore Thayna Silva. After an All-Conference freshman campaign, she injured her knee in spring drills following the season and had to wait for the next 17 months to return to the court for regular season action with her team. Well, to say the least, she made the most of her return as Silva nearly single handedly brought Seward back from dead in their first match of the day to win 3-2 before leading the charge in a three set win over Clarendon in their second contest of the day to give the Lady Saints a 2-0 record after their first day of action.

To say that the Lady Saints looked a little bit nervous out of the gates is an understatement. The veteran group featuring nine sophomores, struggled early on in their season opener against Otero as they fell behind 8-1 to start the action in the first set. They drew to within four at 11-7, but a service error halted any momentum they might have had and the Rattlers took control back, going up 14-7 moments later. A kill from Thayna Silva later in the set got the Lady Saints back within three at 18-15 but they couldn't creep any closer and remained down by the same margin later on at 23-20. A pair of errors sealed the deal for the Lady Saints in the first as they fell 25-20.

Sending a message in the second set, Seward Head Coach Bert Luallen sat down his two top guns on the outside in Silva and fellow returning All-Conference hitter Carolina Gasparini. Early on it looked as if the move was the right one as the Lady Saints got out to an 11-7 lead and they continued to push the pace to 15-10 after a kill from Alex Wood on the outside. A service error once again put a stop to Seward's fueling fire and Otero used the hiccup to go on a quick 4-1 run to get to within two at 16-14. The Lady Saints gave themselves some distance late in the set, going in front 21-17 and looked poised to knot things at one apiece, but Otero stormed to the finish line in the second to win 25-22 and leave the Lady Saints scratching their head for answers down 2-0.

Things didn't look like they were going to get much better for Seward in the third as they quickly found themselves in an 8-3 hole to start the set. A timeout and stern talking to from Luallen seemed to wake up the gals in green as they scored six of the next seven points in the set to tie the score at 9. It remained a nip and tuck battle to the midway point where Seward held a slight 15-14 advantage, and that is when Silva took over the match. She started with three kills in a four point stretch and picked up another kill late before finishing things off with a pair of aces to give Seward the set 25-17.

In the fourth it was a two man show between Silva and Carolina Gasparini that kept the Lady Saints afloat early on. Two kills each from the Brazilians kept the set tied at 6 and Gasparini picked up kills number three and four to give the Lady Saints a 12-8 lead at the halfway point of the set. That is when she passed the torch to Silva who simply dominated the remainder of the fourth set. Silva could do no wrong as she registered kills in a number of different ways including tipping balls to the open spot, finishing off errant Otero passes, and even an attempt to save a ball with a backhanded swing at nearly an impossible angle. She finished the set with a barrage of seven kills and Seward carried all the momentum into the deciding set as they blew the Rattlers off the court with a 25-11 win. Seward finished the set with 15 kills and 0 errors as a team, good for a .544 hitting percentage when all was said and done.

The deciding fifth set was decided pretty early on as once again the Seward hitters took control of the game. Thunderous kills from Angelina Minor and Nacole Miller got things going and before

they knew it, the Lady Saints were to the crossover, leading 8-3. The lead moved to six on a kill from Silva to make it 10-4, but Otero wasn't ready to concede just yet as they scored a couple points in a row to make it a 10-6 contest. With Silva's statline already filled up for this one, she passed the baton back to Gasparini who finished the fifth set with four kills in five points to open up the Lady Saints lead and eventually put the nail in the Rattlers coffin at 15-7 to give Seward the improbable come from behind 3-2 win.

Silva and Gasparini were nearly flawless in the win, literally. The two combined for 37 kills and just 2 errors on 63 swings, good for a final hitting percentage just shy of .500 for the match. Silva ended the contest with video game numbers, racking up 21 kills on 30 attacks in four sets of work while Gasparini had 16 kills and just 1 error on 33 swings. Also contributing to the Seward offense was Minor who wrapped up her first collegiate match with a .417 hitting mark with 7 kills in 12 chances. Seward had three players in double digits in assists as Miller led the way with 18 and Kristen Anderson chipped in 14 while Taryn Bedore had 11. Kari Anderson paced Seward's backline with 21 digs while Megan Sharratt led them at the net with 4 blocks.

SEWARD COUNTY/OTERO BOX

SCORE<http://www.sewardsaints.com/sports/wvball/2014-15/boxscores/20140822_qfgp.xml>

Things figured to get a little bit easier for the Lady Saints in their second match of the day as they went up against a Clarendon squad in which they handled easily during the two teams scrimmage match just six days prior. However, that was not so much the case in reality.

Another slow start put the Lady Saints in an early hole in the first and after coming back to tie things up, a dry spell put Seward in a 10-7 hole to get things going. A kill from Silva drew tied the set later on and a solo block from Minor put the Lady Saints ahead 13-12. It went back and forth from there until Seward finally took control late in the set. A kill from Carolina Freitas and then a block from Minor and Freitas got things moving in the right direction and kills from Gasparini and Silva polished things off as the Lady Saints went on to win the first set 25-20.

A poor start to the second gave Seward a small hill to climb in the second as they found themselves down 3-1, but the Lady Saints went on a run outscoring Clarendon 7-1 and then 9-2 quickly gave the Lady Saints their biggest lead of the set at 10-5. It looked like things were under control for the Lady Saints, but a five point stretch of two reception errors and a pair of attack errors allowed the Bulldogs to hand around and before Seward knew it, Clarendon had climbed all the way back into the set and at 21-20 actually took their first lead since early in the set. A big block from Taryn Before and Freitas tied things back up and after remaining deadlocked at 24, a mistake on the Clarendon side of the net, followed by a block from Minor and Sharratt sealed the deal on a 26-24 Seward win to go in front 2-0.

Clarendon remained pesky in the third as they took an early 9-8 lead before a 4-0 and 6-1 run turned the tables and put the Lady Saints in the drivers seat, up 14-10. Three more Gasparini kills and a slew of Clarendon errors did the Bulldogs in and the Lady Saints went on to win the third 25-19 to sweep the match 3-0.

Silva and Gasparini were once more at the forefront of the Lady Saints offensive attack as Silva led the way with 14 and Gasparini finished with 12 kills to pace Seward. Miller and Kr. Anderson combined for 30 assists in the match and Silva and Ka. Anderson teamed up for 32 digs. Seward finished with 9 team blocks in the match including 6 from Minor and 4 each from Freitas and Sharratt.

SEWARD COUNTY/CLARENDON BOX

SCORE<http://www.sewardsaints.com/sports/wvball/2014-15/boxscores/20140822_yjyi.xml>

The Lady Saints get off to a quick 2-0 start in Lamar's Little Caesars Classic and will look to keep that unblemished record intact on Saturday as they go up against the host team Lamar, followed by a date with Bethany College's JV squad.

SCCC/ATS