

## **FAMU Volleyball to NCAA Tournament**

FAMU Volleyball (21-12, 15-1 SWAC) are the SWAC champions for the second consecutive year. The Rattlers defeated Alabama State 3-0, to remain the SWAC champions on November 20.

FAMU has an automatic playoff spot in the NCAA Volleyball tournament for winning their conference. The Rattlers are set to play the SEC champions and 3rd seed, University of Florida on Friday, December 2 in Gainesville, FL.

The Rattlers closed their regular season out with tremendous momentum. They enter the NCAA Tournament having won 18 of their last 19 outings.

SWAC champions, but the tough battle begins soon. The University of Florida are also champions of their division. The SEC is a tough conference, leading all conferences in the nation with 7 teams out of 64 in the NCAA tournament.

However, FAMU is looking to redeem themselves from a first-round loss in the tournament last year to the University of Florida.

Head Coach, Gokhan Yilmaz of FAMU Volleyball believes his team is better prepared for the tournament this year.

"We always want to play in December," FAMU coach Gokhan Yilmaz said. "We're playing a very good team, but we've played some bigger teams similar to what Florida plays. "We knew we would draw a big name in the NCAA tournament again and we learned from those matches to make practices more intense."

When asked about last year's first round exit, Yilmaz said "Last year was not a very good showing for us overall." "Having that experience definitely helped us and I expect us to be more prepared this time", Yilmaz stated. "We're not as nervous as last year."

Florida is a talented team. SEC Freshman of the Year Alexis Stucky, Merritt Beason and Marina Markova who earned All-SEC honors are star players on the Gators. They will pose a threat to the Rattlers defense. FAMU also has star players to match the talent of Florida.

Dominique Washington is the two-time SWAC Volleyball Player of the Year. Broke Lynn Watts transfer from Murray State was named the SWAC Newcomer of the Year, Brooke Hudson was named SWAC Libero of the Year and Irem Ucar is the SWAC's Setter of the Year.

This will be a high stakes game, both teams are going to have to put the best effort forward to advance to the next round.

The powerhouse Gators vs the determined Rattlers. The winner of this game will advance to play the winner of Florida Gulf Coast University and Iowa State. This is a win or go home game. The Rattlers must pull off an upset win to make a run in the tournament.