

Tiara Thompson, Lady Rams tame Panthers at Branch-G!

by **John Harris Jr.** |
VILLAGER Sports
Reporter

(AUSTIN, TX) - Huston-Tillotson's women's volleyball team did it again last week. For the second time this season, the Lady Rams, members of NAIA Division I, upset Division I Prairie View.

This time, the Lady Rams won on their homecourt, defeating Prairie View in straight sets, **25-22, 25-17, 25-12** to improve their record to 16-2 and 4-1 in entering Friday's match against Our Lady of the Lake at Mary E. Branch Gymnasium.

H-T senior Miranda Washington recorded a team-high 18 digs and junior Tiara Thompson led the way with 11 kills for the winners.

"Excitement is building. It's definitely the talk of our campus. Beating Prairie View twice in a season definitely makes a statement," PV coach Daniel Behnke said.

The second match between the teams was a virtual repeat of the first meeting on Aug. 29. H-T won that match in four sets, 25-12, 18-25, 25-23, 25-20. In two matches this year



Junior Tiara Thompson (#6) led H-T with 11 kills against Prairie View

against the only Division I opponent on its schedule, H-T won six of seven sets against Prairie View in an impressive display of total domination.

Prior to last week's rematch, Prairie View coach TaCho Tyler attempted to convince her players not to view H-T as a NAIA team that plays in a lower classification., Prairie View is a much larger school with far more resources and can award scholarships to all of its players if it so

desires. That isn't the case for the Lady Rams.

"We need to come out like they are a SWAC opponent," Taylor warned. "We have to continue to compete at a high level regardless of who is on the other side of the net."

H-T, despite not being able to recruit and sign talented players with the potential to play at the Division I level with the same frequency as Prairie View, has a better team than

Prairie View this year. The Lady Rams are a special volleyball team.

The first time the teams met, Behnke said

he believed Prairie View may have overlooked his team. That wasn't the case in the second meeting. Prairie View's play-

ers knew full well what the Lady Rams were capable of after losing to them the first time.

"Prairie View was another great win for us. It does a lot for our confidence," Behnke said. "Prairie View was missing two starters. Nonetheless, they're still a Division I volleyball program."

Prairie View's Taylor was forced to agree after her team's second loss to H-T this season.

"We didn't play well," Taylor said. "We didn't play to our potential, although we were missing two starters. We shouldn't use that as an excuse why we didn't play well."

Prairie View Snaps Grambling's 26-game winning streak

by **John Harris Jr.** | VILLAGER Sports Reporter



Prairie View against Grambling State in the State Fair Classic. Photo by Steve Hamm/special contributor Dallas Morning News

(DALLAS, TX) - It was a long time coming for Prairie View's football team. The Panthers snapped a four-game losing streak to Grambling while ending the Tigers' 26-game winning streak in the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC).

Time will tell if it's a changing of the guard in the SWAC West Division, but Prairie View's 22-16 victory over Grambling at the Cotton Bowl last week was a big first step for the Panthers in their quest to replace Grambling as the team to beat in the SWAC West.

First-year Prairie View coach Eric Dooley knows all about what it takes to beat Grambling. That's because Dooley was Grambling's offensive coordinator for four years before Prairie View came calling last December.

Dooley is undefeated as a coach in the Prairie View-Grambling series. He was 4-0 against the Panthers as a Grambling assistant. And he's 1-0 against the Tigers as Prairie View's head coach.

Standing on the opposite sideline in his first head-to-head matchup against Grambling head coach Broderick Fobbs - the man who hired him - Dooley instilled his players with a confi-

dence that was absent in recent matchups against the Tigers.

It was easy for Dooley to coach the Panthers when they led Grambling 12-0 after one quarter, 15-2 at half-time and 22-2 after three quarters.

The Prairie View side of the Cotton Bowl rocked with glee, showing love on their new football coach against the Panthers' biggest and most hated rival. However, it wasn't so easy when Grambling rallied to score two fourth-quarter touchdowns and pulled within six points with under four minutes to play. It got even more dicey for Dooley when Grambling recovered an onside kick at the Grambling 46.

At first, it looked like Prairie View was almost ready to fold as the Panthers had done in other recent matchups against the Tigers. Grambling quarterback Geremy Hickbottom, who replaced starter Aldon Clark late in the third quarter, guided the Tigers to a pair of first downs.

But following back-to-back incompletions, setting up third-and-10 at the Prairie View 30, safety Ju'Anthony Park saved the day with a clutch interception inside the 10.

Credit Dooley for not allowing his players

to succumb to the pressure of the moment. Dooley's poise under pressure is why Prairie View athletic director Ashley Robinson hired Dooley in the first place.

Late in the game, Grambling's players acted like they expected to win. Meanwhile, Prairie View's players looked as if they expected history to repeat itself - resulting in another Grambling victory in the series. When it counted most, Dooley gave Prairie View's players the confidence and focus that was lacking in previous meetings.

"The last four years, I had a lot of success with Coach Fobbs. I learned a lot," Dooley said.

Fobbs praised his former pupil after the game.

"Football is a funny game and this was one of those times," Fobbs said. "We played well defensively, with the exception of the two big plays in the first quarter (Prairie View built a 12-0 lead on two long touchdown passes). Our offense was able to move the ball in the second half but we just couldn't produce when it mattered. Prairie View is a heck of a football team and has an outstanding coach, who I was fortunate enough to work with over the past four years."

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