Lady Buff basketball at West Texas State College built a legendary reputation throughout the 1980s and 1990s as a dominant force in the Lone Star Conference, but it wasn’t the only women’s athletic team at WT making its mark. Lady Buff volleyball also began to build a momentum that would result in national championships and a winning legacy. The women’s volleyball program, like the basketball program, struggled for respect and the right to play throughout the 1970s. By the 1980 season, the Lady Buffs earned a bid to the regional tournament at UTA under Coach Bobbie Cox. The team continued to build consistency over the next few seasons, and in 1986, Kim Hudson took over the coaching duties. During her tenure at WT, Hudson would officially turn Lady Buff volleyball into a winning program. Her record of 127 wins and 25 losses would see WT win two Lone Star Conference titles and one co-championship. She also was named the 1990 Division II Coach of the Year by the American Volleyball Coaches Association.

Before her departure in 1990, Hudson had received a videotape from Brazil that featured two players with lightning speed and blistering kills. She convinced them to make a trip to Canyon, and even though they initially planned on staying only a month, Ana Carolina and Ana Christina Pereira stayed to become Lady Buffs and ignited the WT women’s volleyball program in the early 1990s. In 1993 new coach Debbie Hendricks threw her hat into the Lady Buff ring. Hendricks’ WT career was an incredible success, and she was named 1997 AVACA NCAA Division II National Coach of the Year and 1997 and 1998 LSC South Division Coach of the Year. One key factor in Hendricks’ winning seasons was Amarillo High product Sarah Butler. After being named Big 12 Freshman of the Year at the University of Texas in 1996, Butler shocked the volleyball world by returning to her hometown to play at WT. The Lady Buffs 1997 season ended with an 18-match winning streak, a 37-3 record and a national championship. The 1990s were a golden era for Lady Buff volleyball. Butler was named NCAA Division II Player of the Year in 1998 and 1999 and eventually joined only five other women named to the NCAA Division II all-time volleyball team. After graduating, she joined the WT coaching staff, reinforcing the solid foundation that she helped to establish for Lady Buff volleyball.