
The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club
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Up In the Polls and Ready to Roll!

Big Ten volleyball coaches and the media agree—MSU volleyball is moving up this year. The consensus of the pre-season polls is that the Spartans will be number 3 in the Big Ten and Sweet-16 in the country.

First out, in mid-July, were the Volleyball Magazine Division I rankings. MSU came in at number 16, moving up from number 19 at the end of last season, in spite of the loss of Erin Hartley. The Spartans were the third highest-ranked Big Ten team, behind number 10 Ohio State and number 12 Wisconsin. Penn State at number 17 and Illinois at number 18 round out the Big Ten's dominance of the second half of the top twenty.

Stanford, led by 2001 Player of the Year Logan Tom, was picked to repeat as national champions. Tom will reportedly miss the beginning of the season, while she plays with the U.S. National Team.

On July 31, the Big Ten released its coaches' poll. As in the Volleyball rankings, MSU came in third in the conference, up from a fourth-place finish in 2001. Ohio State was picked to win the conference championship. Overall, the coaches expect to see a continuation of the status quo, with no team moving more than one spot up or down from their finish in 2001. Ohio State and MSU were the only teams ranked higher than their 2001 finish.

Coach Chuck Erbe is skeptical about Ohio State as number 1, but won't reveal for whom he cast his vote. He sees the Big Ten championship as a battle between MSU, Penn State, Wisconsin, and Ohio State. He predicts "The conference will go to the team that stays injury-free, and the team that has the greatest resolve night after night to win matches. That team could easily be us. This year's Spartans are the most prepared, the most committed team ever, not just one or two players, but everyone."

Volleyball Magazine Pre-Season Rankings

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Stanford | 11. Utah |
| 2. Hawaii | 12. Wisconsin |
| 3. USC | 13. UCLA |
| 4. Nebraska | 14. Northern Iowa |
| 5. Florida | 15. UC Santa Barbara |
| 6. Pepperdine | 16. Michigan State |
| 7. Long Beach State | 17. Penn State |
| 8. Arizona | 18. Illinois |
| 9. Pacific | 19. Notre Dame |
| 10. Ohio State | 20. Colorado |

Big Ten Pre-Season Coaches' Poll

Rank	School	2001 Finish
1	Ohio State	2
2	Wisconsin	1
3	Michigan State	4
4	Penn State	3
5	Illinois	4
6	Minnesota	6
7	Michigan	7
8	Northwestern	8
9	Indiana	9
10	Iowa	10
11	Purdue	10

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The Big Ten coaches also picked their pre-season all-conference team. This year the team includes two Spartans, Nikki Colson and Angela Morley, who were both honorable mention selections on the 2001 all-conference team. Ohio State had the largest representation on the team, with three players. If the coaches are right, this should be a big year for middle blockers in the Big Ten. The team had a record number of middles, including seven of them from seven different schools.

Pre-Season All-Conference Team

Player	Year	Pos	School
Lisa Argabright	Sr	MB	Illinois
Erin Moore	Jr	MB	Michigan
Nikki Colson	Jr	S	MSU
Angela Morley	Sr	MB	MSU
Cassie Busse	Jr	OPP	Minnesota
Bethany Brafford	Jr	MB	Minnesota
Erika Lange	Jr	MB	Northwestern
Stacey Gordon	So	OH	Ohio State
Suzie Stiling	Sr	MB	Ohio State
Katie Virtue	Sr	S	Ohio State
Mishka Levy	Sr	OH	Penn State
Cara Smith	Jr	M/OH	Penn State
Erin Byrd	Sr	OH	Wisconsin

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Pre-Season Events Scheduled

◆ As a SideOut Club member, you're invited to join the team and coaches for the first practice of the season on Sunday, August 11. The afternoon practice runs from 3:30 to 6:30, and you can come as early as you like. At the end of practice, the team will join us for a "picnic". You'll be able to meet the new players, and talk to the returning ones as well. This is a Club recruitment event, so bring any friends who might be interested in joining the SideOut Club. There is no charge, but donations will be accepted.

◆ The opening exhibition on August 24 this year will be a double feature. First up at 6:00 pm will be a match featuring MSU alumni. Over 20 players are expected to return for this event. Following that, at about 7:00, will be the Green & White match.

Also on August 24, following the conclusion of the match, will be the annual membership meeting of the SideOut Club. The meeting will include election of four Board members and discussion of issues from the Board as well as from each of you. Please plan to attend this important event, and bring your suggestions about Club activities, ideas about how we can increase support for the team, etc. The meeting will be held in Jenison, the location to be announced at the match.

Team Notes

◆ Junior Nikki Colson returns as team co-captain for 2002, and senior Emily Engel has been chosen to join her, succeeding Lisa Ashton in that role.

◆ One indication of MSU's potential this year is that it will be the first season since 1995 that the Spartans have had the same setter for two consecutive years.

◆ The Spartans have a new volunteer coach this year. Scott Shearer, a Texas A&M graduate, had worked summer camps, and Chuck thought he was a good fit with the program. His duties will include scouting, match stats, video exchange and video breakdown.

◆ Diana Steplyk was one of three Spartans honored in April with the Provost's Award as Freshman Student-Athlete of the Year. The award was

presented at the Spartan Academic Excellence Gala put on by the Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS). Other awardees were men's basketball player Chris Hill and Kevin Estrada from the ice hockey squad.

◆ The schedule of the Coca-Cola Classic had to be altered this year to avoid a conflict with the MSU football game at 3:30 pm Saturday. The morning session will start at 8:00 am, with MSU's match scheduled for 10:00 am, in order to finish by noon. The evening session will start at 6:00 pm, with MSU playing at 8:00.

◆ Due to variations in the calendar, the NCAA volleyball season is a week longer than usual this year, providing fourteen weekends of regular-season play. The Spartans' usual schedule for the pre-conference season consists of three tournament appearances, which is supplemented this year with an individual home match September 20 against Northern Illinois University. This will give the players a less strenuous competition schedule for the two weeks preceding the opening of the Big Ten season, perhaps giving them a little time to recuperate from three consecutive tournaments.

◆ Chuck says that recruiting for the entering class of '03 is already complete, with verbal commitments for all available scholarships. The coaching staff is now focusing on this year's high school juniors, recruiting for '04.

◆ All MSU matches, both home and away, will be broadcast on the Internet this year, with the same feed available on the radio as well. John Kreger will handle the announcing duties again this year. The radio station doing the coverage will be announced later, as will the television schedules.

◆ Assistant coach Todd Dagenais enjoyed a challenging spring as he spent quite a bit of time from January to May as an assistant coach to the USA Volleyball Women's National Team. He started out at the national training center in Colorado Springs, Colorado assisting USA head coach Toshi Yoshida with both individual and team skills. The training was preparation for an exhibition tour of Japan, as well as for the upcoming World Grand Prix.

In May, Todd was part of the team that traveled to Japan for their first international competition of the year. The team was made up primarily of recent college grads, without some of the leaders from the last Olympics such as Logan Tom and Danielle Scott. The team won only two of seven matches, prompting coach Yoshida to say "Overall, Japan played at a whole different level than the USA, even though they used three high school players."

Todd wrote a couple of fascinating reports about the trip, describing in particular the cultural differences encountered by the team. You can read these reports as the "Dagenais Diaries" on the MSU volleyball web site, at <http://msuspartans.ocsn.com/sports/w-volley/archive/msu-w-volley-2001.html>

New Locker Room Almost Finished

As of August 1, the volleyball locker room in Jenison was full of trim carpenters, painters and electricians, putting the final touches on the new facility. Chuck Erbe was checking the progress several times per day, answering their questions and pointing out areas that still needed work. In spite of the late date, everyone involved was saying that the work would be completed in time for the opening of practice August 11.



Chuck is obviously very pleased with the team's new quarters in spite of a few reservations. When asked about the beautiful natural maple trim, he says "I'm getting used to it. I'm an oak fan myself, so I would have preferred oak, but this came out really well."

As he shows a visitor around, stepping over the conduit on the floor and trying to stay out of the way of the electronics installers, he points out the prominent location where Val Sterk's national team jersey will hang. He explains how the locker room will be an important recruiting aid, with the complex lighting combination of spotlights and track lights designed specifically to provide a dramatic experience for a high school player visiting Spartan volleyball for the first time.



Chuck is quick to point out the advanced video capabilities, rattling off the litany of "video projector, big screen, VHS, DVD, digital, satellite, cable" as though he's been through it a few times before. He insists however, that the coaches won't be moving video-editing activities from their cramped quarters up to the new facility. "The locker room is a home for the players, and we don't want anyone, even the coaches, doing anything that intrudes on that."



On another visit a few days later, we find Emmy Miller, Kyla Smith and Nikki Colson checking it out themselves. They admit that the location will be a little less convenient for the team, as they'll have to go up and down two flights of stairs to get to and from the arena. But, according to Kyla "Because it's upstairs we got more space, so there's room for a lounge. The locker rooms downstairs are smaller."

The engraved brass plates bearing sponsor names have been mounted over the lockers, but there are still a couple of open spots in case you were still thinking about it. A donation of \$2,500 gets your name over the locker for ten years, and would be a big help in covering the costs of the locker room. Contact Chuck Erbe at 355-4750 to take advantage of this opportunity.

USPV To Draft Two Ex-Spartans

Two more former Spartan volleyball players will be joining the fledgling United States Professional Volleyball league for its second season. The USPV held initial tryouts for its 2003 season the weekend of July 20. From the pool of 109 candidates, 14 were chosen that weekend, while 42 others remained under consideration for the draft.

The two ex-Spartans who are immediately eligible for the draft are Dana Cooke ('96) and Christie Landry ('01). Val Sterk ('96) and Courtney DeBolt ('95) represented MSU in the USPV during its first season.

For 2003, the USPV is expected to double its number of teams from the four charter members that played the 2002 season. The expansion cities will be announced in August. The details of the 2003 draft will be announced shortly after that.

President's Corner

by SideOut Club President Jenny Bond

The message has been the same whenever I have talked with a SOC member this summer. We are ready for the 2002 season! We are eager to support our team and excited about the season possibilities! I hope that you will continue to support the SOC and the team. The Board is planning a number of

activities and these will only be successful when you choose to participate. As with so many things, the more you contribute and participate, the more rewards you will receive. Fortunately, we have a fine group of young women-students and athletes and a hard working coaching staff who need our continued support at matches and related activities. Each of you will have the opportunity to assist SOC in its efforts to provide the support this program greatly deserves. Invite someone who has not attended a MSU match to attend with you—you may need to “bribe” them the first time. If our team is as exciting as I think it will be this year, no incentive will be necessary for the next match.

The SOC will be busy this year in its efforts to support the volleyball program as much as possible. We will be in charge of the year-end banquet again per the request of Coach Erbe and the Athletic Department. (We actually came out in the black in 2001—our first year with this effort.) There will be a SOC membership table set up at each home game to recruit new members and to interact with current members. Your first opportunity of the season to support the team will come on August 11. Plan now to say hello to the new and returning team members. It should be an exciting time. John and I had the opportunity to attend several spring tournaments and we think that you will be pleased with the development of the team. I know that they have been working hard this summer so that they can bring their best efforts to the floor with co-captains Nikki and Emily. The team and coaches deserve the very best efforts from the SOC and each fan—your Board with your help will aim for nothing less.

Can you believe that our SideOut Club donated more than \$10,500 to the volleyball program this last year—\$7000 presented to Coach Erbe at the banquet and \$3500 additional to support the new locker room. We have a relatively small membership—but we work hard with the merchandise table, raffle, banquet, etc. The needs are still great for the team and for Jenison, so fund raising will be a major objective of the SOC board this year. We hope you will participate in our efforts.

We hope you will join the SOC on August 11. I look forward to seeing you at the August 24 Green and White game and having you participate in the SOC

Annual Meeting. Check the letter dated July 25 sent to members for more information. If you have ideas related to how SOC can better serve the team and you as a member, please email me at jbond@msu.edu or phone at 517-676-2676.

Go State!

Spartans Get Transfer From Colorado

The MSU volleyball coaching staff received a pleasant surprise this spring when Sara Villwock, a sophomore at the University of Colorado, told them she would like to transfer to Michigan State for her final two years of play, with eligibility this fall.

Sara is a 6-1 left-side hitter who was a two-year starter for the Buffaloes, playing in all 59 matches during her freshman and sophomore years. Coming out of high school in Fort Collins, Colorado, she was a Volleyball Magazine Fab 50 selection who chose the University of Colorado over Colorado State, Auburn, California, Texas A&M, Purdue, Cincinnati and Michigan State. In her senior year of high school she was Colorado's 5A Player of the Year and led her team to a state championship.

She had one of the top freshman seasons in the history of the UC program, and went on to average 2.73 kills per game and 2.35 digs per game over her two years there. The Buffaloes advanced to the second round of the NCAA tournament in both 2000 and 2001.

Chuck Erbe says “Sara is a great addition—a great athlete and potential All-American. As a two-year starter in the Big 12 she's already accustomed to top-flight competition. She decided she was looking for a different volleyball experience than she was getting at Colorado, and MSU most closely fit what she's looking for.”

(Am amusing side note—if you look at the MSU press release about Sara's transfer, found at <http://msuspartans.ocsn.com/sports/w-volley/spec-rel/052102aaa.html> you'll see her Colorado media guide photo, with a Spartan jersey digitally superimposed!)

Ticket Prices Increasing

Single-match tickets for volleyball will cost more this year, the athletic department has announced. At the same time, free admission for MSU student, faculty and staff has been eliminated. The good news is that season-ticket prices remain unchanged.

Chuck Erbe fully supports the changes, which will also apply to women's basketball. He's not worried that attendance will drop because of the cost. "The product is worth it. We have one of the most exciting programs a spectator can find at MSU. To offer free admission devalues the product."

He also sees admission fees as important for the status of the sport. "Volleyball needs to become a revenue sport. If we want respect, and to be a major player in athletics, we have to carry our weight."

The new ticket prices are as follows:

Adult	\$8
Youth	\$5
Senior Citizen	\$5
MSU Student	\$5
MSU Faculty/Staff	\$5
Ages 8 & Under	free
Season ticket (14 matches)	\$56

For season ticket information, call 1 800 GO STATE.

2002 Rule Changes, Part II

The March issue of The Service Line reported on the NCAA adoption of the libero position this fall, which will have a very visible effect on the game. The NCAA has also announced that the libero adds enough complexity to the game that a single scorekeeper can no longer do the full job. Now an assistant scorekeeper will be required for every match simply to keep track of the liberos!

Also new this year is the "pursuit" rule. Previously, if a player made a bad pass, so that the ball went out of bounds over the net past the outside of the antenna, her teammates could not save the ball once it passed the plane of the net. The pursuit rule allows

players to pursue an out-of-bounds ball to the opponent's side of the court and play it back to a teammate who can use the third hit to return it to the opponent's court.

The rule has been used internationally for several years. The rationale is that it allows play to continue, with some potentially exciting plays, instead of unnecessarily ending the play with a whistle.

Chuck does not like this rule, and insists that the team will not practice it. He feels that it endangers athletes, and it happens so infrequently that it does not add to the appeal of the game.

To alleviate these concerns, this rule will be used only in arenas where there is enough room for players to pursue the ball safely. The NCAA decided that this requires two meters of clearance behind the referee's stand and behind the net standard on the other side of the court. Jenison does not appear to have this much space, so we will probably not see this rule in effect at home matches.

When the rule is used, a couple of restrictions apply:

- ◆ The ball being pursued must have crossed the net out of bounds, i.e. passing over or outside the antenna. If it crosses the net in bounds it is no longer playable by the team who hit it over.
- ◆ A player who is pursuing must not enter the opponent's court; the only area where the ball can be played is the opponent's free (out-of bounds) zone.
- ◆ When the ball is hit back to the player's own court, it must cross the net over or outside the antenna.

NCAA Takes Over Volleyball Rules-Making

As reported last year, 2002 is the year that the NCAA took over the full responsibility for women's volleyball rules. For many years, the NCAA has used the rule set developed by the National Association of Girls and Women in Sports (NAGWS).

Eventually, the NCAA decided that it wanted more control over the formulation of rules, as it does for most other sports. The association now has its own committee, headed by former Nebraska coach Terry Pettit, and including four representatives from Division I, two from Division II and two from Division

III. Of these, at least two members must be administrators (i.e. athletic directors) while at least five must be coaches. There is also a ninth member who is the secretary/rules editor.

For fans, an interesting benefit of this switch is that the rules are now available online. Under the NAGWS, the only way to get the rules was to buy a printed rule book. The NCAA still sells printed rules, at a very reasonable price of \$7.50, but it also offers them for download in Adobe Acrobat format. You can order by phone at 888/388-9748. To order online or download, go to:
<http://www.ncaa.org/library/rules.html>

National Season Opens at Minnesota

In 2002, for the first time in its eight-year history, the State Farm Women's Volleyball Classic will be

hosted by a Big Ten school. The opening tournament of the Division I season, traditionally featuring top volleyball powers, will be held August 23 and 24 at the University of Minnesota.

Stanford is the 2002 defending national champion and is making its third appearance in the tournament. The other three teams—Pepperdine, Northern Iowa, and Minnesota—are first-time participants.

The Big Ten has been represented in the tournament six out of its first seven years, four times by Penn State and twice by Wisconsin. Penn State won the event in 1997.

Four times in those seven years, the eventual national Division I champion came from the four teams in the State Farm Classic. Only once, in 1998, did the winner of the tournament (Long Beach State) go on to become national champion.

2002 Spartan Volleyball Roster (listed by year of eligibility)

No.	Name	Year	Ht.	Pos.	Hometown/High School
11	Emily Engel	Sr./Sr.	5-8	DS	Bay City, MI/Bay City Central
2	Angela Morley	5th/Sr.	6-4	M	Holland, MI/West Ottawa
3	Kyla Smith	Sr./Sr.	6-0	OH	Comox, B.C./Highland Senior Secondary
6	Nikki Colson	Jr./Jr.	5-10	S	Lincoln, NE/Pius X
15	Stephanie Knopp	Jr./Jr.	5-10	DS	Cupertino, CA/Monte Vista
18	Emmy Miller	Jr./Jr.	5-8	L	Okemos, MI/Okemos
8	Jenny Rood	Jr./Jr.	6-2	M	Ada, MI/Rockford
10	Sara Villwock	Jr./Jr.	6-1	OH	Fort Collins, CO/University of Colorado
5	Michelle Kopka	So./So.	6-2	M/OH	Scarborough, ON/Cedarbrae Collegiate
14	Kim Schram	So./So.	6-2	OH	London, ON/Oakridge Secondary
1	Diana Steplyk	So./So.	6-0	OH	Libertyville, IL/Libertyville
17	Marley Bellwood	So./Fr.	5-8	L	Battle Creek, MI/Lakeview
4	Caroline Belich	Fr./Fr.	6-1	OH	Burr Ridge, IL/Lyons Township
12	Mickey Davis	So./Fr.	5-9	S	Villa Hills, KY/Notre Dame Academy
7	Brooke Langston	So./Fr..	6-2	M	Germantown, TN/Evangelical Christian
	Kristy Snell	Fr./Fr.	5-9		Concord, MI/Concord High
13	Megan Wallin	So./Fr.	6-3	M	Sarasota, FL/Cardinal Mooney
	Courtney Williams	Fr./Fr.	5-9		Ada, MI/FH Northern

2002 Schedule

(All home matches are played in Jenison Field House. All times listed are Eastern.)

8/24	ALUMNI/GREEN & WHITE	6:00 pm	10/4	OHIO STATE	7:00 pm
8/30-31	COCA-COLA/MSU VOLLEYBALL CLASSIC		10/5	INDIANA	8:00 pm
Friday	Oakland vs. South Carolina	5:00 pm	10/9	@Michigan	7:00 pm
	MSU vs. Georgetown	7:00 pm	10/12	@Penn State	7:00 pm
Saturday	South Carolina vs. Georgetown	8:00 am	10/18	@Wisconsin	8:00 pm
	MSU vs. Oakland	10:00 am	10/19	@Northwestern	8:00 pm
	Oakland vs. Georgetown	6:00 pm	10/25	PURDUE	7:00 pm
	MSU vs. South Carolina	8:00 pm	10/26	ILLINOIS	3:00 pm
9/6-7	@Western Michigan Invitational		10/30	MICHIGAN	7:00 pm
Friday	Western Michigan	7:30 pm	11/1	PENN STATE	8:00 pm
Saturday	Depaul	10:30 am	11/8	@Indiana	7:00 pm
	Wright State	5:00 pm	11/9	@Ohio State	7:00 pm
9/13-14	@South Florida Tournament		11/15	IOWA	7:00 pm
Friday	Georgia Tech	5:00 pm	11/16	MINNESOTA	8:00 pm
Saturday	Kansas State	11:00 am	11/22	@Illinois	7:00 pm
	South Florida	7:00 pm	11/23	@Purdue	7:00 pm
9/20	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	7:00 pm	11/29	NORTHWESTERN	7:00 pm
9/27	@Minnesota	8:00 pm	11/30	WISCONSIN	7:00 pm
9/28	@Iowa	8:00 pm	12/6-12/7	NCAA 1 st & 2 nd round	
			12/13-14	NCAA Regionals	
			12/19-21	NCAA Championships in New Orleans, LA	



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