

The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club
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Spartans Start Second Half With One Big Win and One Big Loss



Jenny Rood swinging away at 5-5 in game 5 against Penn State
Photo: Al Schmitzer

The Big Ten has seen some strange match results this year, but none were stranger than MSU's back-to-back matches against Michigan and Penn State. First, Michigan disposed of the Spartans in an easy four-game match that saw some of the worst Spartan play of the season. Two nights later, MSU came back from a 1-2 deficit in the first three games to beat Penn State for their biggest victory so far this year.

Around the Conference

The biggest surprise in the first half of the Big Ten season was that Ohio State, the pre-season pick to win the conference, had their worst conference start in history, losing their first five matches. In other incongruous results, Illinois lost to Northwestern on

opening night and then defeated two-time defending champions Wisconsin a day later. Two weeks later, the Illini lost to basement dweller Iowa, handing them their first win, and turned around the next night to defeat conference-leading Minnesota, handing them their first loss. At the same time, Indiana repeated Illinois' feat of the first weekend, losing to Northwestern and winning over Wisconsin. To end the first half, Wisconsin lost to Northwestern, then turned around and beat Penn State, knocking them out of a first-place tie.

To top it all off—in what has to be a first—through the first six weeks of the season the state of Michigan was deadly for other Big Ten teams. Every team that made their road trip to Michigan—Ohio State, Indiana, Purdue, Illinois, and Penn State—went home with two losses!

MSU vs. UM

The only good thing you could say about the MSU/UM match was that it drew the largest crowd so far this year. The outlook seemed good coming into the match, with MSU undefeated at home this year, and without a home loss to Michigan since 1993.

Unfortunately the match was a disaster, with the Spartans making one mistake after another. Statistically, Jenny Rood's hitting and serving were the only bright spots. Chuck Erbe practically cleared his bench, playing twelve different players in an attempt to find someone who was on her game. He even switched positions for Angela Morley and Megan Wallin halfway through the match to see if it would make a difference.

It was a terrible start to the second half, and had Chuck commenting that the problem of inconsistency "can't be fixed in one practice."

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MSU vs. Penn State

Friday night produced an entirely different story, although you wouldn't have known it at the start of the evening. The Spartans looked grim while warming up, with very few smiles, as if they were anticipating another whipping. As the match started, the situation looked even worse, with Penn State winning the first five points on MSU errors.

Fortunately, the Spartans turned things around quickly, and soon it was as if we were seeing an entirely different team from Wednesday night.

Kim Schram in particular was hitting as we haven't seen her in quite a while. Jenny Rood had seven kills in game one and eventually reached a career high of 24. The MSU block was working, either stopping or at least touching most of the Penn State attacks. The passing was good enough to let the offense stay in system. Although the first game seesawed back and forth, MSU made their final run at the right time, bouncing back from 26-28 to win game one.

After a fairly easy victory in game two for the Lions, MSU almost locked up game three at 27-24, but Penn State came roaring back to win it, due in part to more Spartan errors. Things deteriorated badly in game four, with way too many points being won on errors by one team or the other. Fortunately the Spartans made fewer mistakes than Penn State and came up with the victory to tie the match at two apiece.



Angela Morley hit .522 against Penn State

Photo: Al Schmitzer

Game five had the crowd on the edge of their seats, with numerous ties and lead changes. Eventually, as Chuck put it, the Spartans "battled out of their errors" better than Penn State did, and won the match.

The downside of the match was that even though it was exciting, there was a lot of less-than-stellar volleyball. Penn State's Mishka Levy had more than twice as many hitting errors as her usual average, with many of them coming at crucial times. MSU made a number of gaffes of their own letting several balls fall to the floor untouched. The Spartans especially had trouble with the serves from Totorello and Hayden. But, even though it wasn't a championship performance, it was a big win over a top opponent.

Since this was the first time Penn State had lost a match in East Lansing since 1996, none of our current players had ever enjoyed a victory over the Lions at Jenison, and many in the audience had never seen one either. It was the Spartans' only win over a top-fifteen team this season, their biggest victory since defeating Penn State in State College last November, and arguably the most important home win since beating Wisconsin in 1998. Way to go Spartans!

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Volleyball on the Internet

Several fans have asked this year where to find good volleyball sites on the Internet. Since the last time we

covered this was in 1999, it's probably an overdue subject.

bigtenvb Discussion Group

If you like to discuss volleyball, or just listen to others discussing it, you should start with Big Ten Women's Volleyball on Yahoo Groups:

groups.yahoo.com/group/bigtenvb

As described at the site: "This list is for discussion of Big Ten Conference women's volleyball. It's a place where fans of any of the Big Ten teams (or of the conference in general) can discuss the sport. Appropriate topics include (but are not limited to) results of recent matches, discussion of upcoming matches, new recruits, booster-club issues, and updated conference standings."

The discussions are truly wide-ranging and show a diversity of opinions and knowledge, from the new or casual fan to the highly-involved veterans of the sport. Several of the Big Ten coaches are members of the list, but they generally spend most of their time lurking rather than posting messages.

You have to join this group in order to read the messages. When you join, you can choose either to receive all messages via email as they are posted or to come to the web site when you want to read messages.

Division I Women's Volleyball

Probably the question I've been asked most often this year is where to find match results. There are several places I look for results, but by far the most comprehensive is Division I Women's Volleyball: www.richkern.com

To check scores, use the link "GameScores Live" and choose what date you're interested in. The scores are usually available within half an hour to an hour after the end of a match. But while you're there, take a look at the astonishing array of other volleyball information the site contains.

Unlike most sites that consist of static web pages, Division I Women's Volleyball is almost completely database-driven. This means that the pages are created dynamically from the latest information, based on what you ask for and how you choose to have it displayed.

You can learn, for example, that more Division I players (698) come from California than any other state (no big surprise), and that Michigan ranks seventh with 142. A little more exploring shows that of the 2002 recruits nationwide, three players were 6'5" tall (all listed as middle blockers) and three were 5'2" (all listed as defensive specialists).

There are links to web sites for all Division I teams and conferences, separate links to their press releases, links to all the live webcasts and live stats sites nationwide, complete rosters for all teams, six different national rankings, including three polls and three computer rankings, and much more.

Big Ten Volleyball

For Big Ten news, results and stats, the obvious place to go is the conference web site:

www.bigten.org/vol/wvol

This site is updated even on weekends, so it can be a fairly convenient place to find the Big Ten scores all in one place. The Composite Schedule lets you see exactly who is playing whom this weekend, as well as all past conference results. The statistics pages show the leading players in the conference, and how each team ranks in all performance categories. There are profiles of and Q&A sessions with Big Ten players, with Angela Morley featured recently. The full Big Ten volleyball press release for the week is also available here.

AVCA

For nationwide information, try the American Volleyball Coaches Association site:

www.avca.org

At the home page, there is quite a bit of material, such as the Job Line, that covers all types of volleyball. You never know what you'll find exploring here. For example, looking at the Job Line recently uncovered the fact that ex-MSU assistant coach Laura Farina left Marquette University this year to take the head coaching job at Auburn University.

From the home page you can navigate to the "Collegiate Game", followed by "Division I", or you can use the direct URL:

www.avca.org/collegiate/di.html

The AVCA, of course, is the sponsor of the weekly Division I coaches' poll and the national player of the week award, so you can always find the latest

releases of these here. You can also research the polls for the last twenty years and the players of the week for the last ten years.

This is also the best place to find attendance information for all schools, including the top-attendance matches for the current year as well as per-team totals and averages for previous years. There are plenty of other pages to explore here.

The AVCA also has match results, posted in a couple of different forms. If you look at the weekly coaches' poll on this site, you'll see that it shows the opponents that each top-25 team will play this week, and as the matches occur the results are posted. One weekend recently, the AVCA site showed the Wisconsin upset of Penn State before the Division I Women's Volleyball site did. On Mondays, they update the Weekly Results page with a complete listing of all results, with interesting sections, such as "Top 25 losses to unranked teams".

NCAA Statistics

If you're interested in statistics, you'll eventually wind up at the official NCAA statistics site:

www.ncaa.org/stats/volleyball/

where you can check the current statistical leaders, look at the NCAA record book, and compare coaching records. You can even read the official statistician's manual, to learn how volleyball statistics are recorded.

NCAA Volleyball

For more general NCAA info on volleyball, try:

www.ncaa.org/sports/volleyball/

Come tournament time, you can find the official bracket here through the Championship link. There is also a link to the complete NCAA women's volleyball rule set, as well as the NCAA's own power rankings (also known as RPI) of teams broken down into the eight regions of the country.

rollShot

If you get tired of looking up stats and match results and reading the official sites, you might try:

www.rollshot.com

the site that describes itself as "an *offspeed* volleyball webzine". They cover all types of volleyball, but devote a lot of space to women's college play. If you look in their "Legends" section, you'll find an interesting article about Val Sterk.

Al and Renee's Photo Page

There are no facts or figures to be found at this site, no match reports, no analysis, in fact not much of anything to read at all. Instead, when you go to my.voyager.net/~flare you'll see it's all about photos. Al Schmitzer takes photographs at almost every MSU home match, as well as a few road trips, and he puts them on the web for all to see.

MSU SideOut Club

Of course you already know the SideOut Club has its own web site at:

www.msusideout.org

Here you can read news about the team, find out about Club events, order Club merchandise, and read back issues of the newsletter. In addition, if you go to the Links page, you'll find all of the sites mentioned in this article, so you don't have to type the addresses yourself!

★★Volleyball Trivia Question★★

Which state produces the most Division I volleyball players per capita?

President's Corner

by SideOut Club Board President Jenny Bond

Greetings! If you missed the tailgate party on October 5, you missed a great time. We had more than 100 people attend. Several parents of the players told me that their daughters thought it was so great that we were having a tailgate—just like football fans. (Aren't you glad that you are a volleyball fan now?) Thanks to John Ulrich, Cathy Caswell and Dave Birney who organized this event and contributed much in terms of food and drink to make it a great success. The MSU volleyball family is a very special one and an advantage of such an event is to get to know other fans better. We will plan at least one tailgate party next year.

How about that win over Penn State last week! Can you believe that the season is half over? There is still time, however, for you to participate in several club activities and to continue to support our team.

Coach's Luncheons: November 16th and 30th.

We plan to invite all the parents in town for the final matches to the luncheon on the 30th. They are a

very special group that I know all of you will enjoy meeting. I cannot guarantee you how many will be attending but anticipate that some will. I promise that you will enjoy this session with Coach Erbe.

Bus Trips: If your plans change so that you can join us on November 9 for Ohio State, call Julie Carmichael. We still hope to get enough for the bus trip to Illinois on November 22.

Banquet: Your invitation for this December 1 event will come within a few days. I am sure that you will want to attend and pay tribute to the entire team but especially to our seniors, Angela Morley, Kyla Smith and Emily Engel. The event should be a fun time for all. We are trying to make it a special event for the team—and YOU have an important part in that. In addition to the regular meal, we will have a special-priced children's meal so that more families can participate.

If you have suggestions about persons or companies who may be interested in sponsoring a table at the banquet, please contact me soon. All SOC members will have the opportunity to "sponsor" a player—more details will be in your invitation.

Need an idea for a Christmas or holiday gift? Check out the SideOut Club merchandise table. We have several new items this season including a hooded sweat shirt. Need a man's gift—try a white or green golf shirt. One can never have too many MSU volleyball shirts!

New Board Members: Kay Schmid and Diana Priebe have resigned from the Board. We thank them for their service. We are happy to inform you that Chuck Riley and Shirley Garrity have agreed to serve as Board Members and we welcome them.

Thanks for participating in signing the "card" for Erin Hartley who is playing in Italy now. Her parents will be visiting her for Thanksgiving and have agreed to take the 4 large posters. I also appreciate the comments received on the email messages I recently sent, especially those related to the decibel level of the PA system. We think that it is important that the SOC serve to support the team—and we try our very best. However, the Board feels that it is also important that we serve as an advocate for the fans. Making and keeping supportive fans is one of the

best things that we can do to support the program. Do not hesitate to contact me with your comments or questions.

Go Green!

Team Notes

Sara Villwock is expected to be granted a medical red-shirt season for this year, so she will be with the Spartans for two more years. If she had played one more match she would have been ineligible for red-shirt status.

Brooke Langston has been incapacitated with back spasms recently, but was able to practice on a limited basis this week.

★★Answer to Trivia Question★★

According to www.richkern.com, Indiana has sent 29.9 volleyball players per million population into the current Division I ranks. Idaho is second, Illinois third, Utah fourth, and California fifth.

MSU Men Host Tournament

If you're not going on the bus trip this weekend, you should head to MSU's IM West building to watch some volleyball, as MSU Men's Volleyball hosts their annual "Back to the Hardwood" tournament on Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10. This is the 13th year for the tournament, which features top men's college teams from throughout the region.

MSU men's volleyball operates as a club sport, rather than a varsity team, but don't let that mislead you. You'll see very high level volleyball, and the contrast with women's play is very interesting. Especially impressive is the power and quickness you'll see in the men's game.

The regular season for the men starts in January, and their schedule will be posted at their web site <<http://www.msuvball.com>>. Every SideOut Club member should enjoy a men's match at least once. (Once the women's season ends, you can count on seeing some of our women players in the audience at the men's matches.)

2002 Schedule and Results

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

8/30	W	Georgetown	30-25, 30-13, 30-24
8/30	W	Oakland	30-24, 30-20, 30-18
8/30	W	South Carolina	20-30, 31-29, 33-31, 34-32
9/6	W	Western Michigan	30-21, 30-27, 30-28
9/7	W	Depaul	30-25, 30-17, 30-20
9/7	L	Wright State	30-26, 25-30, 30-25, 22-30, 11-15
9/13	L	Georgia Tech	22-30, 32-30, 28-30, 23-30
9/14	W	Kansas State	31-29, 30-25, 22-30, 30-27
9/14	W	South Florida	27-30, 35-33, 30-23, 30-24
9/20	W	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	30-20, 30-25, 30-19
9/27	L	Minnesota	23-30, 27-30, 28-30
9/28	W	Iowa	30-26, 30-25, 19-30, 30-27
10/4	W	OHIO STATE	30-27, 23-30, 30-28, 26-30, 17-15
10/5	W	INDIANA	31-29, 30-25, 30-18
10/9	L	Michigan	25-30, 20-30, 24-30
10/12	L	Penn State	19-30, 24-30, 27-30

10/18	L	Wisconsin	25-30, 35-33, 23-30, 25-30
10/19	W	Northwestern	30-26, 29-31, 30-19, 30-17
10/25	W	PURDUE	30-23, 30-23, 30-19
10/26	W	ILLINOIS	38-40, 30-22, 30-21, 25-30, 16-14
10/30	L	MICHIGAN	24-30, 27-30, 30-24, 18-30
11/1	W	PENN STATE	31-29, 20-30, 28-30, 30-24, 15-13
11/8		@Indiana	7:00 pm
11/9		@Ohio State	7:00 pm
11/15		IOWA	7:00 pm
11/16		MINNESOTA	8:00 pm
11/22		@Illinois	8:00 pm
11/23		@Purdue	7:00 pm
11/29		NORTHWESTERN	7:00 pm
11/30		WISCONSIN	7:00 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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