
The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club
Vol. X No. 2
August 2004

Ready for the Season!

Fans will get their first chance to meet the 2004 Spartans at this Sunday's Meet the Team Event. We'll get to see the players in a game setting at the Alumni and Green and White matches on August 28, with the season opening just six days later with the Coca-Cola/MSU Volleyball Invitational at Jenison. The team's schedule and details of special events planned by the SideOut Club appear elsewhere in the newsletter. There will be a lot of special activities, so make sure to check out the program's official website (<http://msuspartans.collegesports.com/sports/w-volley/msu-w-volley-body.html>) and the SideOut Club's website (<http://www.msusideout.org/>) for late-breaking news.

The club will have a new look this year as the result of the loss of five key contributors from last year's squad – Nikki Colson, Stephanie Knopp, Emmy

Miller, Jenny Rood, and Sara Villwock. There is, however, no reason to consider this to be a rebuilding year. The Michigan State Volleyball program has invested heavily in redshirt seasons with no fewer than ten of the thirteen returning players having put in a redshirt campaign. —————**Cont. on p. 4**

Meet the 2004 Team at the First Practice!

By SideOut Club President Jenny Bond

Sunday, August 15th is a green letter day for MSU Volleyball fans. Join SideOut Club members for the annual "Meet the Team Event" in Jenison Fieldhouse between 6:00-6:30 PM. Coach Erbe and the team will join us for a "picnic" – subs, drinks, fruit and cookies will be the fare. This will be your first opportunity to meet the freshmen – the new kids on the court. Plus, we get to welcome the returning team members.

Make plans now to attend this special perk as a SideOut Club member. No advanced reservation necessary. No formal dress required. No baby sitter needed. Bring your enthusiasm, your appetite, and a camera, if you wish. This event usually lasts about 60-90 minutes. We hope to see you there!

RENEWAL TIME

Your renewal form for 2004-05 membership in the SideOut Club is enclosed with this mailing. Forms are also available at the SideOut Club website. The MSU Volleyball program and the SideOut Club greatly appreciate your continued support!

Captains' Message

By 2004 Co-Captains Megan Wallin and Brooke Langston

We are so excited about the upcoming season! The training and team bonding that we have undergone since the close of last year's season has strengthened us and given us great reason to be excited. The team has shown so much dedication throughout the summer to prepare for our very competitive schedule. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm that the SideOut Club provides for our program, and we look forward to a very successful season! We can't wait to see all of you at the Green and White Game on the 28th!

*Go State,
Megan and Brooke*

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Spartan Profile: Ed Tolentino

There will be a new face on the Spartans' coaching staff this season, and you won't have to watch assistant coach Ed Tolentino for long before you notice his energy, drive, work ethic and infectious enthusiasm. But you have to get a little closer to gain an understanding of the source of those character traits.

A Sterling Heights native, Ed received a Bachelor of Science degree in Sports Medicine from the University of Detroit Mercy and rose quickly in his chosen profession. He was hired by the Detroit Tigers to work as an athletic trainer in their farm system and immersed himself in his work. For an afternoon game, he would customarily arrive at the ballpark by 5 a.m. to be available for players who needed wraps and other specific pre-game attention. He remained busy throughout the morning, with his preventative skills being in constant demand as players stretched, warmed up and went through infield and hitting practice. Then came the game itself, followed by the equally important task of ensuring that each player received thorough treatment for the usual aches and pains and for specific concerns.

Ed notes that few fans have any idea of how many people's efforts have gone into preparing for that game, but he does. As a result, when he takes in a game, he arrives long before game time to observe as much as possible of the process that leads to the finished product. Moreover, he enjoyed the quiet satisfaction of knowing that he was making a valuable contribution, because every sprained ankle or torn muscle could mean the end of an athlete's dream. As a result, he didn't mind the fact that his working days frequently stretched to 14 or 15 hours.

But pursuing his career with the Tigers meant that much of his time was spent in Florida, which created a more serious dilemma. Ed's father suffered a closed-head injury twelve

years ago and, since Ed is an only child, much of the burden of caring for his father fell upon his mother.

For several years, Ed had been coaching volleyball during the baseball off-season. Ed isn't one to do anything by half-measures, and he experienced immediate success as a coach. He coached at two high schools, then was hired as an assistant coach at Oakland University and eventually assumed head coaching duties, all while still working full-time for the Tigers. After he coached Oakland to an upset victory over Eastern Michigan, it helped him gain an interview for a full-time position as an assistant coach at Eastern.

When he was offered the position at Eastern, it was a difficult decision because it would mean giving up a career that he had worked so hard to establish. But Ed thought it over and realized that his duty to his parents was pre-eminent, so he took the job that allowed him to stay closer to home. He spent two very successful seasons at Eastern, with the school posting a 27-7 mark in 2003. On March 1, he joined the MSU coaching staff.

Ed Tolentino enjoys talking about his days with the Tigers, and is delighted that players whom he worked with in the minor leagues, such as Omar Infante, Fernando Rodney and Brandon Inge, are now experiencing success. But he is a forward-looking person and his considerable energies are now focused on a new challenge. His immersion in his new responsibilities was exemplified during spring practices when, with Mickey Davis the only returning setter, Ed served as second setter.

When I asked Ed about what he advises fans to watch for during a volleyball match, his response reflected the same process-oriented approach that characterized his days with the Tigers. He observed that spectators who only watch the ball can miss the most interesting parts of a match. He suggests taking a few points and focusing instead on an individual player or on how the front court or back court players collectively react to the ball's movement. This will increase appreciation of the extraordinary feats of athleticism that can be buried in a single point – spikers and blockers who reach high enough to dunk a basketball, back row players who react instantaneously to retrieve a tipped ball, setters who must prepare for and anticipate an entire spectrum of possible scenarios. Once a spectator begins to notice these individual components, they gain an appreciation that much of what appears spontaneous or haphazard is actually a skill nurtured by long hours of practice.

Ed is very excited about another opportunity to work with elite athletes, and to again play a key – if often unrecognized – role in preparing them to excel. Every aspect of his life has prepared him for that challenge.

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How I Spent My Summer Vacation

If you're like me, the summer has passed all too quickly and half the things you intended to get done are still languishing on your to do list. But Spartan volleyball players have kept very busy indeed. All thirteen returning players from last year's squad were in town over the summer, taking courses and working out together under the leadership of co-captains **Megan Wallin** and **Brooke Langston**. Players and coaches present, past and future have also engaged in a wide range of activities:

Service Line Special Wedding Correspondent **Becky Erbe** reports:

Lead assistant **Daune Koester** was married on May 29 to Damon Rensing. The original plans were to hold the wedding on the MSU soccer field, since the groom is an assistant coach with the men's soccer team and a former All-Big Ten soccer standout for Michigan State. The site had to be changed because of a wet field, but fortunately rain held off on the day of the wedding and a beautiful outdoor ceremony was held behind the Kellogg Center. One week later, former coach **Todd Dagenais** and Katie Mitzner exchanged vows while cruising the Grand River on the Princess Riverboat. Plenty of members of the Spartan volleyball community were on hand for the blessed events.

Freshman defensive specialist Miken Trogdon found time for a unique event. Miken's mother Cheryl reports:

Miken Trogdon and her dad, Ed, participated in the Moosejaw 2004 Adventure Race "Spring Fury" on May 8 in Chelsea, Michigan. Ed has always wanted to do an adventure race, and he thought this would be a good one to begin with. He enlisted Miken as his partner and she eagerly accepted the challenge. The race consisted of trekking, biking, navigation, ropes, and canoeing. Miken said the canoeing was definitely the most fun part, and finding the punch cards at each checkpoint was the most difficult. There were many times when they had to carry their bikes because they couldn't ride them over

the rough terrain. Miken's only preparation for the 42-mile race was riding her bike around campus and her volleyball training. They finished the race in about 8 hours and both fared pretty well, considering they had never done a race like this before. They certainly learned a lot about adventure racing and what not to do next time (i.e., forget the "over 40" reading glasses to read the small map with)! Needless to say, they were bushed when they got home Saturday night! Miken said that this race was one of the most challenging athletic events she has ever participated in, but wouldn't hesitate to do it all again. They both enjoyed just being together.

Recent alumni **Erin Hartley**, **Angela Morley** and **Jenny Rood** played together again as part of a team at the US Open Volleyball Tournament in Atlanta, Georgia. They finished an impressive second in the top division, losing only to the 2004 USA Women's National Training Team, which featured USC All-Americans Emily Adams and Keao Burdine.

Incoming freshman setter **Maggie Griffin** capped an extraordinary prep career by leading her Sports Performance Club to its second straight championship at the USAV Junior Olympic Championships in Houston, Texas. Maggie was named MVP for the second straight year, an unprecedented accomplishment.

As cool as it has been in East Lansing, a couple of our players experienced still less summery weather. **Kim Schram** tried out for the Canadian National Volleyball Team in Winnipeg in April, and subsequently traveled with the national team as they played five matches in Alberta against the Japanese national team. (This also gave Kim the opportunity to practice her second language of Japanese.) **Chuck Erbe** flew to Winnipeg to watch the tryouts and was greeted with four inches of snow!

Emmy Miller also missed out on the chance to bask in the sun. She spent part of the summer in Australia as part of the MSU Study Abroad program.

Ready for the Season—cont. from p. 1

The benefits of that investment will be reaped this fall, as the club will boast a unique blend of experience and youth. As the team roster shows, seven fourth-year players will be joined by an abundance of younger players to form one of the deepest squads ever to represent Michigan State. The results of the spring tournaments were encouraging, as many players showed that they were ready to accept new responsibilities. Moreover, the team has considerable versatility, so that the team could potentially benefit from the emergence of one player by having several other players assume new roles.

As a result, this year's campaign should be a building season rather than a rebuilding season. There will be some ups and downs in the early going as the team becomes comfortable with new combinations while testing themselves against a rugged schedule that includes defending national champions USC. But we can expect the team to gather momentum as the season progresses, and once they hit their stride – watch out, Big Ten!

To show how deep this squad will be, consider the options the coaches will have at the various positions. At setter, a fierce but friendly competition can be expected between **Mickey Davis** and highly touted incoming freshman **Maggie Griffin**. Co-captains **Megan Wallin** and **Brooke Langston** return to anchor the middle, but they will be pushed for playing time by sophomore **Caroline Belich**, freshman **Andrea Hansen** and incoming freshman **Meghan Schoen**. **Brooke Langston** could move to opposite, where she saw considerable time last season, but that position already has a returning starter in **Michelle**



Kopka. Michelle in turn could move to outside hitter, but that position also features a wealth of options. Seniors **Kim Schram** and **Diana Steplyk** return as outside hitters, but they will face pressure from talented freshmen **Katie Johnson**, **Jessica Hohl** and **Alex Ratcliff**. The back row also features considerable depth. **Marley Bellwood** is the returning starter at libero, and **Miken Trogdon** and **Tracy Bellwood** will be looking to earn playing time as defensive specialists. But they too will have to fend off stiff competition, as **Mickey Davis** and **Diana Steplyk** have experience there and each front-row player will be looking to earn additional playing time.

It is thus very difficult to predict what the starting lineup will look like at the start of the season and almost impossible to guess what it will look like by the end. But there are a couple of things that can be predicted with complete confidence. The outstanding depth will mean that practices will be as competitive as they have ever been. And Michigan State will always be represented on the volleyball court by six outstanding student-athletes who will work their hardest on and off the court to justify your support!



Meet Coach Erbe for Lunch

by Jenny Bond,
SOC President



Make an effort to attend at least one of the coach's luncheons, a favorite event for SideOut Club members in the past. Coach Erbe provides an update on the team and discusses volleyball topics related to the Big Ten and the national scene. He entertains all questions from the participants. Come one time and we think you will be "hooked" on these sessions. Coach's luncheons are scheduled as follows:

When: **Saturday, August 28**
 Saturday, October 2
 Friday, October 22
 Friday, October 29
 Friday, November 12
 Saturday, November 27

Where: Damon's at 1601 W. Lake Lansing Road
(near the 127 exit)

Time: 11:30 AM until about 12:30-1:00 PM

Cost: \$10, which includes a meal, non-alcoholic drink, tax and gratuity

David Martz and Chuck Riley reviewed a number of options before Damon's was selected last year. The decision was such a good one that we will stay at Damon's for 2004. A major factor in the decision is that we have a **separate** dining room for our sessions

so everyone should be able to hear. The selection of dates was made based on when we have home matches that conflict with home football games and the season scheduling. For the first time, we have a session before the Green and White Match. You should feel free to come when you can and leave when you must. If for any reason you do not wish to eat, there will still be a place for you.

Put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. You won't regret it!

Follow MSU Volleyball on the Web

While this newsletter will continue to keep MSU volleyball fans apprised of team news, news doesn't always wait for a monthly newsletter. Fortunately, there are a couple of excellent sources for continually updated Spartan volleyball information on the internet. The program's official website (<http://msuspartans.collegesports.com/sports/w-volley/msu-w-volley-body.html>) is maintained by the MSU Sports Information Department. It includes news, features, box scores and game summaries, and John Kreger's terrific live broadcasts of matches. The SideOut Club's website (<http://www.msusideout.org>) is maintained by Chris Wolf and features up-to-date information on SideOut Club activities and team news. There's also an excellent page of links to a wide variety of volleyball websites and many other features.

Make sure to add both of these websites to your favorites so you don't miss out on any late-breaking news!



. Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Roster

number, name	height	position	class year/eligibility year	hometown
1 Diana Steplyk	6-0	OH/DS	SR/SR	Libertyville, Ill.
2 Jessica Hohl	6-0	OH	SO/FR	Waterville, Ohio
3 Andrea Hansen	6-3	M	SO/FR	Andover, Minn.
4 Caroline Belich	6-1	M	JR/SO	Burr Ridge, Ill.
5 Michelle Kopka	6-2	OPP	SR/SR	Scarborough, Ontario
6 Alexandra Ratcliff	6-0	OH	FR/FR	Champaign, Ill.
7 Brooke Langston	6-2	M	SR/JR	Germantown, Tenn.
8 Meghan Schoen	6-2	M	FR/FR	Aurora, Col.
9 Maggie Griffin	6-0	S	FR/FR	St. Charles, Ill.
11 Katie Johnson	6-3	OH	SO/FR	Brooklyn, Mich.
12 Mickey Davis	5-9	S	SR/JR	Villa Hills, Ky.
13 Megan Wallin	6-3	M	SR/JR	Sarasota, Fla.
14 Kim Schram	6-2	OH	SR/SR	London, Ontario
16 Miken Trogdon	5-7	DS	SO/FR	Lisle, Ill.
17 Marley Bellwood	5-8	L/DS	SR/JR	Battle Creek, Mich.
19 Tracy Bellwood	5-8	DS	SO/FR	Battle Creek, Mich.

Alumni Match— Green & White Game Saturday, August 28

The Green & White game will be held on **August 28** at Jenison Fieldhouse at 7:30. But make sure to arrive by 6:30 to watch the Alumni Match, featuring many past favorites.

Sara Villwock

Outside hitter Sara Villwock has received a medical disqualification that has brought a premature end to her volleyball career. Doctors have determined that, had she continued to play volleyball, it would have been only a matter of time before she suffered another stress fracture in her foot. The good news is that the injury does not in any way affect her daily activities. Sara continues to be enrolled at Michigan State and we hope to see her smiling face at matches this fall.

TAILGATE—Oct. 23

The tailgate, organized by Cathy Caswell, has become a very popular annual tradition. This year's event will take place on **October 23** before the Northwestern match. Bring a dish to share and join the fun!



Rule Change

The most significant change to this year's playing rules is that the libero will be allowed to serve in one rotation. The coach has to designate the rotation on the lineup sheet beforehand.

Co-captains 2004



Megan Wallin



Brooke Langston

photos copyright MSU Sports Information

Redshirt juniors Brooke Langston and Megan Wallin have been chosen as co-captains for the 2004 Spartan volleyball team. Brooke Langston is a middle from Germantown, Tenn. Megan Wallin is a middle from Sarasota, Fla. There are remarkable similarities in their backgrounds. In high school, both were named to the volleyball first-team all-state list after leading their respective squads to state runner-up finish and also earned medals in track in high school. Brooke was a national equestrian finalist and Megan was captain of the basketball squad. Both Brooke and Megan arrived at MSU in 2001, were redshirted, and named to the Dean's List. Both were selected for 2002 and 2003 academic all-Big Ten honors. See the captains' message to supporters in the SideOut Club on page 1.

Court Upholds Decision Against MHSAA

A federal appeals court has upheld a lower court decision in favor of parents of high school volleyball players and against the Michigan High School Athletic Association. The court ruled unanimously that the scheduling of Michigan's high school sports seasons hurts volleyball players. On August 4, the MHSAA announced that they will appeal the decision.

The Dana Cooke Project

Spartan volleyball fans will get a chuckle out of this website: <http://www.danacooke.com/danacooke.html>. The site is owned, not by the Dana Cooke who was an All-American at Michigan State, but by a man of the same name who is a singer-songwriter in Syracuse, New York. On his website, he reports on his ongoing efforts to enumerate and determine the gender of every Dana Cooke in the world (and even one fictional werewolf by that name). Since too many Cookes spoil the broth, he keeps things straight by numbering every Dana Cooke identified to date. While the web owner claims for himself the privilege of being Dana Cooke #1, he grants our Dana the honor of being Dana #2 and bills her as "the Queen of Dana Cookes." He also concedes that she is the most famous Dana Cooke of all, handily beating out Pearl Jam's former lawyer.

There is also an e-mail from our Dana, in which she graciously accepts her crown and offers a review of Dana #1's cd. Oh, and Dana #15 turns out to be a high school volleyball coach in Connecticut who hopes to meet the Queen! Maybe some day all the Dana Cookes will have a reunion at Jenison to see their names hanging from the rafters.



Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

FALL SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Opponent	TV	Time
Sat	08/28/2004	Alumni Green & White		6:30PM
Fri	09/24/2004	@Minnesota*		8:00 PM
Sat	09/25/2004	@Iowa*		8:00 PM
Fri	10/01/2004	INDIANA*		7:00 PM
Sat	10/02/2004	PURDUE*		7:00 PM
Wed	10/06/2004	@Michigan*		7:00 PM
Sat	10/09/2004	@Illinois*		8:00 PM
Fri	10/15/2004	@Ohio State*		7:00 PM
Sat	10/16/2004	@Penn State*	ESPN2	7:00 PM
Fri	10/22/2004	WISCONSIN*		7:00 PM
Sat	10/23/2004	NORTHWESTERN*		7:00 PM
Wed	10/27/2004	MICHIGAN*		7:00 PM
Fri	10/29/2004	ILLINOIS*	FOX	7:00 PM
Fri	11/05/2004	@Purdue*		7:00 PM
Sat	11/06/2004	@Indiana*		7:00 PM
Fri	11/12/2004	IOWA*		7:00 PM
Sat	11/13/2004	MINNESOTA*		8:00 PM
Fri	11/19/2004	@Northwestern*		8:00 PM
Sat	11/20/2004	@Wisconsin*	FOX	8:00 PM
Fri	11/26/2004	PENN STATE*		7:00 PM
Sat	11/27/2004	OHIO STATE*		7:00 PM

Tournaments

**9/3-9/4 Coca-Cola/MSU Invitational
Jenison Fieldhouse**

- Ohio 9/3 7:00pm
- St. John's 9/4 noon
- Florida A&M 9/4 8:00pm

9/10-9/11 Wichita State Tournament

9/17-9/19 South Carolina Invitational

NCAA Tournament

- Dec. 2-5—NCAA First Round
- Dec. 9-12—NCAA Second Round
- Dec. 16-18—NCAA Third Round

NOTE: In the schedule at left, home games are in bold capital letters. All home games are at Jenison Fieldhouse.

**Big Ten matches*



**P.O. Box 80491
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