



The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club
Vol. XI No. 5
November 2005

A Fond Farewell

Next weekend will be our last chance to watch seniors **Marley Bellwood, Brooke Langston, Megan Wallin and Mickey Davis** don the green and white. The

Spartans will be taking on two nationally ranked opponents – Penn State on Friday, November 25, and Ohio State on Saturday, November 26. Both visiting clubs feature All-American setters: Sam Tortorello of Penn State was a first-team selection last year while Ohio State’s Marisa Main was named to the second team.

The weekend’s activities will be highlighted by several special events. Cathy George will give the last “Chalk Talk” of the season before Friday night’s match and fill us in on the weekend’s critical match-ups. **Friday night will be Parents’ Night while Saturday will be Senior Night.** The senior tribute on Saturday night will occur immediately after the match, so be sure to stay for the ceremony.

While Thanksgiving weekend is a busy time for everyone, please try to find time to watch the 2005 Spartans and our four dedicated senior student-athletes in action for the last time.

SOC Activities

November 25– Chalk Talk: The season’s last “Chalk Talk” will be held on Friday, November 25, at 6:10 p.m. in Room 209 of Jenison. These events have been very popular with SideOut Club members, as Coach George fills us in on the key match-ups in that evening’s match.

November 26—Senior Night: The senior tribute on Saturday night will occur immediately after the match.

January 15, 2006—Volleyball Banquet: The 2005-06 year-end banquet is scheduled for Sunday, January 15, 2006. See article on page 7.

Alumnae Night

The home match against Indiana brought a special treat, with more than two dozen Spartan volleyball alumnae being honored at halftime. This year’s team stayed on the court during the ceremony in a nice touch that emphasized the tradition of Spartan Volleyball. Special recognition was paid to the tenth anniversary of Michigan State’s remarkable run to the 1995 Final Four, which was represented by four players, Courtney DeBolt, Dana Cooke, Corie Richard and Lindsey Clayton. Both of Val Sterk’s parents also attended, as did Courtney’s mother. The evening was climaxed in fitting style when all 13 Spartans saw action in a convincing sweep of the Hoosiers.

CONTENTS

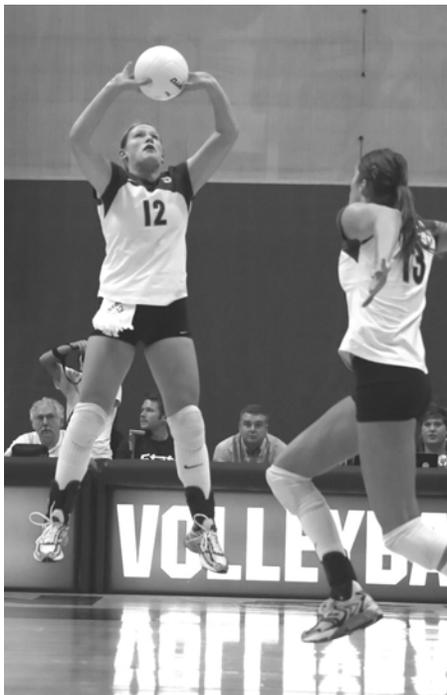
A Fond Farewell	1
SOC Activities	1
Alumnae Night	1
Spartan Profile: Mickey Davis	2
Passing on the Torch	5
Big Sister is Watching	5
President’s Message	6
Volleyball Banquet Plans	7
Did You Know?	7
Fall Schedule	8

Spartan Profile: Mickey Davis

The opposing team has served and a pass is headed toward Michigan State senior setter Mickey Davis. She has only a few split seconds to make the critical decision: will she direct the ball to a middle, to an outside hitter, to a back-row attacker or will she try to fool the defense by tapping the ball over herself? Will it be a quick set or a high lob and how far should it be from the net? So what is going through Mickey's head as the ball approaches?

Actually, Mickey explains, there are such a multitude of factors and so little time that she tries not to think but simply to react. Football quarterbacks are taught to use progressions in selecting a receiver and the setter's decision-making process bears some similarities. The middle hitter is always the first priority, so that player signals before the action starts to let Mickey know what pass she will be awaiting. Thus Mickey's first decision is whether conditions are favorable for setting the middle or whether to move along to her next option.

How does she make that choice? Mickey tries to go to the middle if there's a good likelihood that the attacker will be able to hit the ball before a solid block is formed. On the other hand, if the opposing defenders are committed to following the middle, then that will open up a one-on-one situation for one of the outside hitters and usually make that the preferred option. So in part it's a guessing game with a diabolical catch – the person making the decision is the only person in the stadium whose back is turned to the action!



But it's much more than just a guessing game. Mickey's peripheral vision sometimes enables her to tell how the defense is reacting. More importantly, the coaches go over films before the match and prepare the Spartans for what to be looking for on each of the six offensive and defensive rotations and which matchups they may be able to exploit. This enables Mickey to start each match with an idea of what the defenders are likely to be doing behind her back on each rotation and how she should respond. Additionally, she needs to be mindful of distributing the ball to all of her attackers so that the defense cannot anticipate where the ball is going. Viewed from this perspective, the setter is playing a game of Concentration by having to remember a

multitude of factors in each rotation and react accordingly.

Yet it's even more complicated than that. No sooner does the match start then new variables are introduced: one MSU attacker may be having a good night while another is struggling; the defense may adjust on a particular rotation or present an unexpected look; the personnel on either side may change. Each new development changes the setter's priorities and gives her still more to consider in that crucial split second. So from this vantage point, setting is comparable to a chess match.

(cont. on p. 3)

The Service Line

©2005 by the SideOut Club, the official support group of Michigan State University women's volleyball.

Published five times per year, in March, August, September, October, and November

Newsletter Editor: Peter Morris 517-339-7128
 Newsletter Layout: Kathy Lovell 517-351-1577

President: Jenny Bond 517-676-2676
 Vice-president: Kathy Lovell 517-351-1577
 Secretary: Shirley Garrity 517-641-6713
 Treasurer: Jim Ellis 517-323-3566

MSU SideOut Club, P.O. Box 80491, Lansing MI 48908

Email: jandeellis@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.msusideout.org



All Photos: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Mickey Davis — cont. from page 2

Even that analogy doesn't quite convey the complexity of the position since there is one final variable: the pass from the back row. A tough serve or a pass that is even slightly off may force Mickey to scramble, which eliminates or alters some of her options and forces her to improvise a new plan of attack. So volleyball may most closely resemble a chess match in which the queen is liable to sprawl across the board at any moment.

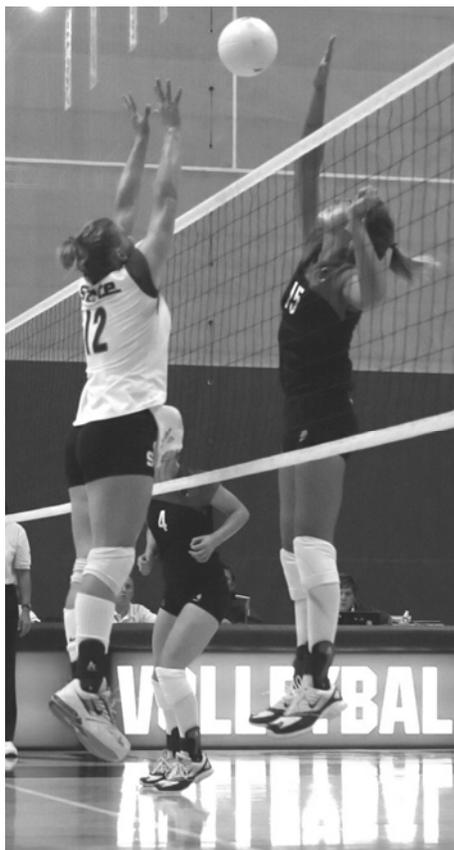
With so many variables to consider, no setter makes the right decision every time. But Mickey's Big Ten-leading 1,335 assists through the season's first eleven weeks attest to how often she is making the right choice. To be leading the conference in assists would be an impressive accomplishment under any circumstances, but all the more so for someone who had never set before coming to college and who, only a few months ago, looked like she might go her entire college career without starting a match at setter. Yet nobody who knows Mickey Davis had any doubts that she would be ready when her time came because her whole life had prepared her for that challenge.

Mickey is quick to credit her family – her parents Doug and Susie and her older sister Christie – for helping her to get ready. Her father played quarterback at Western Kentucky University, and it's easy to see a connection between his position and the fact that both of his daughters became setters – the quarterbacks of the volleyball court. But Mickey feels that a much greater influence on her was the example that her parents set while she was growing up near Covington, Kentucky.

She explains that Doug worked very hard when she and Christie were young so that Susie could stay home with them. Yet he always found time to spend with family activities, highlighted by a family vacation every summer and regular visits with her extended family in southern Indiana. This meant a very close family and one in which Mickey says that there was “no pressure on me.” This made it possible for her to try her hand at a wide variety of sports, with volleyball soon emerging as the favorite of both girls. By fifth grade they had a volleyball court in their backyard and Mickey was already serving overhand.

Her upbringing was also a strict one, with the structure of church every Sunday and a Catholic school education. Her support group gradually expanded to include new members, such as her cousin Chad, who served as her confirmation sponsor, and her club volleyball coach Kathy Kleinhuisen, who became a “surrogate aunt” with a demanding but caring approach. Mickey attended an all-girls Catholic high school, an experience that she loved because it taught her to be independent and self-reliant: “I was not scared to go off to college somewhere where I didn't know anyone.”

But the choice of a university was difficult for another reason. Mickey had become a standout outside hitter, leading her club team to three national finishes and her high school squad to two state championship games and earning such individual accolades as two selections as a USA Volleyball All-American and to the Kentucky All-State Team, the Northern Kentucky Player of the Year award and the much-coveted honor of being chosen as a *Volleyball Magazine* Fab 50 player. Kathy Kleinhuisen continues to tell her players inspirational stories about Mickey's ability to will a team to victory, saying that, “in 16 years of coaching multiple sports I have never and will probably never coach another player like her.”



Even as a Fab 50 player, however, college coaches were reluctant to take a chance on a 5'9" outside hitter. There were scholarship offers from Division I programs but none of them seemed right until Michigan State offered Mickey the chance to become a setter. Of course she'd never played the position, but her sister was already a setter at Winthrop. More importantly, Mickey Davis had never been one to back away from a challenge.

On her first visit to East Lansing, “everything clicked” and Mickey knew that it was the place for her. Her parents told her that they would support whatever choice she made but insisted that she make more visits to be sure that she would be happy there. So Mickey dutifully made two more unofficial visits to Michigan State and another one to see the team play on the road before committing to become a Spartan. And, five years later, she has no regrets about her decision. (cont on p. 4)

Mickey Davis — cont. from page 3

Those five years have brought many ups and downs, but in reflecting back on her career it is the positive memories that will stay with Mickey. Being on a campus as large and diverse as Michigan State's has enabled her to expand her horizons by making new friends from a variety of backgrounds. Yet her college years have also built on her existing strengths, with the rigors of being a student-athlete forcing her to further develop her ability to juggle a busy schedule. "I like the sense of accountability that comes from having to report to someone and having to get everything done," she says. Her success in that respect is attested to by her three selections to the Academic All Big Ten squad, while also finding time for such community activities as reading Halloween stories to local schoolchildren.



Stephanie Knopp comments that, "Mickey has an amazing spirit. Her personality comes shining through on the court because that's how she is all the time. Even when she wasn't playing, she always gave 110% all the time in practice and she always found the right balance between staying calm and keeping her competitive edge. I've never played with anyone quite like her. She's just an amazing teammate."

Mickey's opportunity to start finally came this year and she has made the most of it. The Spartan Invitational in September was her first big test and Mickey came through with flying colors, leading Michigan State to the tournament title and being named to the all-tournament team. Wins have been harder to come by since the start of the ultra-competitive Big Ten season, yet the Spartans continue to compete to

Perhaps more than anything else, Mickey Davis has valued being part of a team. Many of her fondest memories of her teammates occurred far from the volleyball court on such activities as team scavenger hunts or just while hanging out together. She has gone on several spring break trips with teammates and notes that it says a great deal about the strength of their bond when players who spend so much time together still want to spend their free time with one another.

the utmost every night and Mickey continues to rack up the assists. In addition to leading the Big Ten in assists, she has a realistic chance of breaking Nikki Colson's school record for assists in a season.

With the end of Mickey Davis's Spartan career in sight, she has already begun to plan for the future. She will

Playing time was in short supply for Mickey during her first four years but she diligently went about mastering her new position and doing whatever she was called upon to do. Sometimes she saw action as a serving specialist and other times as a back row defender, but more often it was just the unheralded but essential role of being the second setter during practice. As a consummate team player, she never complained but just went on making sure that she would be ready when called upon.



receive her degree in Packaging next month and on January 8 will begin an internship with Amgen, a Fortune 500 company located in Thousand Oaks, California. She wants to spend next summer traveling through Europe and then to begin her career as a packaging engineer in the fall. Ideally, she would like to work in product development, teaming up with specialists in chemistry, physics, marketing and advertising to turn an idea into a finished product. The same qualities that have held her in such good stead on the volleyball court will undoubtedly enable her to experience similar success in this role.

Passing on the Torch

This will be my last issue as newsletter editor. My second book, a massive two-volume encyclopedia of baseball firsts that covers the introduction of everything from the curve ball to the pitching mound to the rally cap, will be published next year by Ivan R. Dee. The first volume is slated to come out in April and the second in September, which is ideal timing for doing book signings during the start of the season and the climax of the pennant races. Unfortunately, those dates conflict directly with the volleyball season and thus my decision to step down.

It has been a tremendous privilege and honor to have served in this capacity and I have been blessed

to have Kathy Lovell’s expert help with the layout. Before being entrusted with the newsletter I believed that the players and staff were worthy of our unconditional support – now I know that they are! Everyone has been unfailingly gracious to me, which has made editing this newsletter a most fulfilling experience. If there is one thing that I have learned during that time it is this: every piece of support that you offer to this to program, whether

big or small, is greatly appreciated by the student-athletes and hard-working staff who proudly carry on the tradition of MSU Volleyball. That knowledge will keep me a loyal supporter of this program and I hope all of you will join me in doing so.

Peter



Peter Morris with Tracy and Marley Bellwood.
Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Big Sister Is Watching

Many people find it difficult to tell the two Bellwood sisters apart, but it’s actually very simple. As the photo at the right shows, Marley (above) is the big sister and Tracy (below) is the little sister!



President's Message

By Jenny Bond, SOC President

Greetings from Asuncion, Paraguay, where John and I are as I write this. I am here for Child Fund International meetings. We hope that you had a great time at the match on the 12th and I know that you made the alums feel welcome.

It was good to see many of you at the University of Michigan match, although we were disappointed in the outcome. The officiating, especially in the first game, was the worst that I have experienced. I was impressed when the team did not give up, but came back to give Michigan some trouble in games two and three. It was also good to see the MSU men's club team beat Michigan handily after the women's match. Maybe we will try to schedule a similar match sometime at MSU. The men have some very good players.

"Roody," Angela Morley and Stephanie Knopp also made it to the match. Angela has finished her dietetic internship at Henry Ford Hospital and is now working in a nursing home in the area. I can imagine how much joy she must bring to the people there with the smile we remember so well. Stephanie was showing off a beautiful diamond.

Coach George allowed the team to stay after the match and watch some of the men's match. It was great to see the team interacting with family, former MSU players and friends. Katie Johnson had a large stuffed hippo that was named Caesar, as I recall. She said she always has some stuffed animal with her when she travels. I had a chance to meet Megan's friend who plays on the football team. The coach's sons were with her and seemed to enjoy the activities. Do not tell them (as it is not "cool"), but I was amazed at how well behaved they were and how much the team obviously enjoys them.

I had a chance to tell Ed Tolentino, one of the 2004-2005 coaches, that we miss him. He is now an assistant coach with Michigan, but came up to say hello to everyone after the match. Fortunately, he is closer to home to help his mother with his dad, who has serious health problems.

The tailgate was a real success. Special thanks to Cathy Caswell, who did another fine job of planning and setting up, and to our brewmaster, Dave Birney, who produced his usual fine product. It is always good to see the volleyball "family" and we were pleased to have some new faces there this year. The coaches and some players graciously stopped by the party too. The rain mostly held off and a good time was had by all.

The banquet will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2006, in the early afternoon. Put this date on your calendar now. We definitely want to have a special event for our seniors, Mickey, Megan, Brooke and Marley.

Have a great Thanksgiving and get to the matches on Friday and Saturday afterward if you are in town. The season has seemed far too short in spite of the record.

Go State!
Jenny Bond



Megan Wallin (above) and other team members signed autographs after a game. Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Did You Know?

- ⇒ Assistant coach Ron Arenz got engaged to Noelle Wiley on Halloween and the couple is planning to get married next summer.
- ⇒ More than a decade ago, setter Courtney DeBolt invited one of her favorite professors to attend a volleyball match on Faculty Night. Jenny Bond became hooked and is now the president of the SideOut Club.
- ⇒ Volunteer assistant coach Mike Gawlik, who writes the weekly e-mails to SideOut Club members on the team's progress, is also the second setter during practice. Mike was the starting setter for the men's team at the University of Pacific so is able to provide the high-quality setting that is essential for effective practices. Mike and student manger Jason Reed both play on the men's club team.
- ⇒ Wichita State, which Michigan State beat 3-0 in the Spartan Invitational in September, has won 23 straight matches since then and is ranked in the Top Twenty.
- ⇒ Ashley Schatzle was selected as a student-athlete of the month for October by Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS). Miken Trogdon received the award in March/April, while Caroline Belich was honored that same month for her community service and outreach work.

Volleyball Banquet Plans

Make plans now to attend the annual volleyball banquet on Sunday, January 15, 2006. This will be our last chance to applaud the 2005 Spartans and an opportunity to hear seniors Marley Bellwood, Brooke Langston, Megan Wallin and Mickey Davis reflect back on their careers. The event will be a Sunday brunch and will be held at the LaSalle Room, which is part of the new facilities at the football stadium. Additional details will be mailed to all SideOut Club members soon.



FALL BIG TEN SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Opponent	Time	Result
Wed	09/21/2005	MICHIGAN	7:00 PM	L 2-3
Fri	09/23/2005	@Indiana	7:00 PM	W 3-1
Fri	09/30/2005	@ Minnesota	7:00 PM	L 3-0
Sat	10/01/2005	@Iowa	7:00 PM	W 3-2
Fri	10/07/2005	PURDUE	7:00 PM	L 0-3
Sat	10/08/2005	ILLINOIS	7:00 PM	L 2-3
Fri	10/14/2005	@Ohio State	7:00 PM	L 1-3
Sat	10/15/2005	@Penn State	7:00 PM	L 0-3
Fri	10/21/2005	WISCONSIN	7:00 PM	L 2-3
Sat	10/22/2005	NORTHWESTERN	8:00 PM	W 3-2
Fri	10/28/2005	@Illinois	7:00 PM	L 1-3
Sat	10/29/2005	@Purdue	7:00 PM	L 0-3
Fri	11/04/2005	IOWA	7:00 PM	W 3-2
Sat	11/05/2005	MINNESOTA	7:00 PM	L 1-3
Wed	11/9/2005	@Michigan	7:00 PM	L 0-3
Sat	11/12/2005	INDIANA	8:00 PM	W 3-0
Fri	11/18/2005	@Northwestern	7:00 PM	
Sat	11/19/2005	@Wisconsin	7:00 PM	
Fri	11/25/2005	PENN STATE	7:00 PM	
Sat	11/26/2005	OHIO STATE	7:00 PM	

Non-Conference Schedule

Sat. 8/27—Kent State—W 3-0

9/1-9/3 **MSU Invitational—home**9/1 **MSU vs Wichita State—W 3-0**9/2 **MSU vs S. Florida—W 3-0**9/3 **MSU vs Ball State—W 3-0**

9/9-9/10 @ University of Kansas Tournament

MSU vs Kansas—L 3-0

MSU vs VCU—W 3-2

9/16-9/17 @ University of Miami (Florida) Orange and Green Challenge

MSU vs Louisville—L 3-2

MSU vs Miami—W 3-1

MSU vs Sacramento State—L 2-3

NCAA tournament starts Dec. 1

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



P.O. Box 80491
Lansing, MI 48908