



# The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club  
Vol. XII No. 3  
September 2006

## Spartans Take Invitational

The Spartans never lost a game as they beat Eastern Michigan, Villanova and Miami to win the Labor Day weekend Spartan Invitational. Led by tournament MVP **Jessica Hohl**, who hit at a sizzling .750 pace in the final match against Miami, the Spartans came out strong and determined. Says Coach George, "We picked up right where we left off with the Ball State tournament. Each match just got better and better. So many individuals stepped up and contributed to the total offense and defense, and that enabled us to play at our all-time best for the year."



Allison Ianni, Ashley Schatzle, and Jessica Hohl receiving awards

Joining Jessica on the all-tournament team were **Allison Ianni** and **Ashley Schatzle**. Ianni had an average of 42 assists per match and Schatzle, 13 kills per match. Outside hitter, **Katie Johnson** also had 43 kills over the three match tournament, and libero **Nicole Colaluca** led the backcourt with 41 digs over the two days. **Tracy Bellwood**, **Miken Trogdon** and **Melaney Raney** all provided great defensive support, and **Heather McDaniel** showed much confidence as she attacked the net.

—cont. on page 2

## President's Message

by Jenny Bond, SOC President

Welcome to the 2006 season! I extend a special welcome to **new** members of the SideOut Club. We are pleased that you have chosen to join us to support the MSU volleyball program. We also welcome the **renewing** members; it is good to see many familiar names on the membership roster and to visit with you personally at the matches.

The good news is that the media guides are available (1 per membership); you will be able to pick them up at the next match you attend. New members also need to check at the SOC membership table to pick up a

—cont on page 5

### Upcoming SOC Events

- Lunch with Coach George—Sept 12, noon, Chile's
- Chalk Talk Sept 16—1 hour before match
- SOC Board Meeting—Sept. 19, 6:00, Jenison
- SOC Annual Meeting—Sept. 22, after Purdue match

### Thank You, Chili's

Welcome to Chili's, a new corporate sponsor of the volleyball program. They have provided numerous promotions at each match including shirts for the Blockheads, between game promotions and two courtside seats to lucky winners for every match. They also have a nice in-store promotion in their restaurant on Marsh Road, north of Grand River in Okemos.

### CONTENTS

Spartans take Invitational .....	1
President's Message.....	1
Thank You, Chili's .....	1
Lunch with the Coach .....	2
Meet the Freshmen.....	3
Chalk Talks .....	3
Position Profile.....	4
Statistics Primer.....	6
Fall Schedule and Results .....	8

### Annual Meeting Notice

The annual meeting of the SideOut Club is Friday, September 22 immediately after the Purdue game.

## Spartans take Invitational—cont. from p. 1

Clearly, the team has many more offensive weapons this year, including freshmen **Mischelle Nelson** and **Vanessa King**. Nelson saw plenty of action, but King's time was very limited due to an injured ankle. **Katie Vander Meer** also saw action replacing Ianni as setter.

The Spartans head to Columbus, Ohio next for the Buckeye Invitational September 8 and 9. Let's hope they can come back for the third weekend in a row as tournament champions.

Photos courtesy of Al and Renee Schmitzer (unless otherwise indicated).



Miken Trogdon

### Lunch with the Coach

Plan on joining Coach Cathy at Chili's on Tuesday, September 12 at noon for the second Coach's Luncheon of the season. Everyone will order off the menu. Plan on attending even if you don't want a full meal.




---

### The Service Line

©2006 by the SideOut Club, the official support group of Michigan State University women's volleyball.  
Published 5-6 times per year.

Newsletter Editor:	Pam Sievers	517-381-5316
Newsletter Layout:	Kathy Lovell	517-575-0765
President:	Jenny Bond	517-676-2676
Vice-president:	Kathy Lovell	517-575-0765
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](mailto:jandeellis@sbcglobal.net)  
Website: [www.msusideout.org](http://www.msusideout.org)

---

### Courtside Seats

Remember to enter the drawing held at every game for two courtside seats for the next game. Only SideOut Club members are eligible, so take advantage of this membership benefit. Submit your name at the table next to the merchandise area.

## Meet the Freshmen—Katie Vander Meer

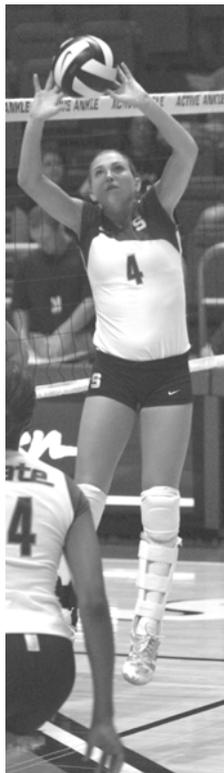


Photo by Katie's father

**Katie Vander Meer** brings a very successful high school career to Jenison Fieldhouse, after being named first team all state as a setter from East Kentwood High School. She's been playing since elementary school and had an early introduction to the sport through her mother, who is a volleyball coach. She is also an accomplished soccer player, and choosing to focus on volleyball was been a tough decision for her.

Katie made numerous visits to check out other volleyball programs, but felt MSU was the best opportunity for her. (She also made several visits for soccer.) She values the education she'll get here, but she also thought the program could really help her develop as a player, and that's important to her. She also liked that it was closer to home so her family including one younger brother could follow her easier.

Katie's major is kinesiology and she hopes to go into business or athletic administration.

Upon signing Katie last fall, Coach George had this to say. *"Katie has played volleyball the majority of her life and is a natural athlete who is very well versed in the game. Very competitive in every sport she plays, she has unbelievable control and jumping ability that will make an immediate impact for us. She is an action setter, who can get to the ball, make things happen and really balance the offensive attack."*



### Help Wanted

SideOut Club members, your help is needed to help us achieve our goal in providing some additional revenue to the volleyball program. Each game, we need help selling raffle tickets, assisting at the merchandise table and greeting people at the SideOut Club Information Table. Please go to the merchandise table at the next game and sign up for a shift to two. Thanks!

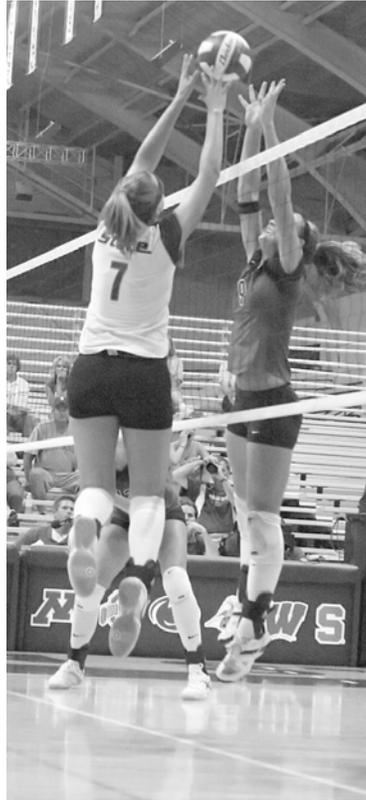
### Chalk Talks

Starting with the September 16 match against Toledo, plan on joining Coach George for her Saturday game night chalk-talks. This is a great way for SideOut members to hear a recap on the previous match (usually a Friday night contest) and a preview of what we can expect for the match that night. Each chalk talk begins one hour before the match in a room on the second floor. Remember, this is another benefit of your SideOut Club membership.

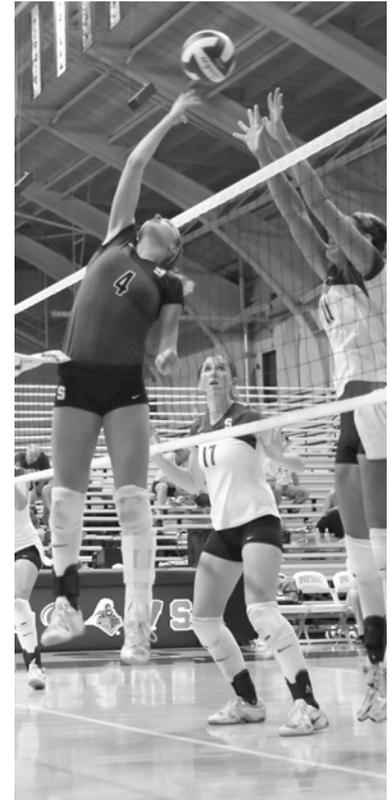
# Position Profile—Setter

*Note: Each issue will feature a different position. Thanks to Mike Gawlik for providing the information.*

The **setter** is the equivalent of a volleyball team’s quarterback. The setter is primarily in charge of taking every 2<sup>nd</sup> ball, no matter where it is on the floor. They are in complete control of the offense and make all the decisions on who is going to attack. It is the setter’s job to tell the attackers what set choice she wants to run in an attempt to fool and deceive the blockers from the other team. It is important that a setter be a good leader and confident enough to set the ball from any spot on the floor.



Allison Ianni



Katie Vander Meer



Allison Ianni

A good setter will mix up the different sets and balance the offensive load between middles, right sides, and outsides. The setter has the responsibility of making every set hittable and attempts to put the hitter in a position to be successful. However, don’t assume the setter will set EVERY ball to a hitter! A good setter will occasionally tip the ball over the net rather than set it to a teammate to keep the defense on their toes and steal a kill every now and then. Allison Ianni will be our setter in 2006, but newcomers Katie Vander Meer, Emily Fahrer, and Sarah Harris look to take the reigns in the future for the Spartans.



## President's Message—cont from page 1

SOC shirt (1 per membership with the option to purchase an additional one for \$5.00 if you have a family membership). Check out the additional merchandise and remember that as a member, you receive a discount on your purchases.

It is going to be a good season. A good crowd gathered for the “meet the team” event and what fun it was to see the seven freshmen for the first time. We missed welcoming Allison Ianni with the group because she had broken her nose in the scrimmage. Fortunately, she was able to join us before the end of the event—still smiling and pleased to be at MSU. We are glad that she plans to wear the plastic face guard all season—it is so intimidating.

A good time was had by all at the Coach's luncheon preceding the Green and White match. Attendance exceeded our expectations. The coaches—all of them—exceeded our expectations as well. Cathy made an excellent presentation including comments on the team, season, recruiting and other items of interest, including a demonstration of some of her points. Members shared information related to the time they had been following MSU volleyball. A number have a record of more than 25 years; these are obviously die-hard fans regardless of the season record. Cathy is working with us to schedule a few additional luncheons, probably on Fridays to allow for her game preparation on Saturday. I constantly remind myself that she is “in the office” when some of us are not and respect her time, especially before matches. As I understand it, she reviews all the tapes, breaks them down, and develops the game/match plans; she usually does not have the tapes until a few days before a match, as I understand the routine.

The Green and White match was fun. I hope those of you who attended like the new seating arrangements. We especially liked the new set up with the scorer's table—the lights should not “blind” fans who are sitting across from the table as they did in the past. It was good to meet some of the parents of the new players. They are enthusiastic and already expressing appreciation for what the SOC does for the program.

John and I enjoyed going to the tournament at Ball State University. Their facility is excellent—especially the sound system. I am sure all of you could appreciate that after being in Jenison. The need for a better sound system is on a long list of needs for the program/Jenison as I understand it. I think all of us recognize that it is impossible for the SOC to get a “home” equity loan for improvements in Jenison. Just kidding!

You probably know by now that MSU won the tournament. Overall, we were pleased with the play. We were especially pleased to see how well freshmen, Vanessa King and Mischelle Nelson, played in their first real match—they had great chemistry in blocking and hit well. You are going to find Allison very exciting as well. It was great to see all of the team on the court and in practice.

It was also good to see so many of the parents in attendance as well. We learned that Katie Vander Meer's mother is a volleyball official. She was able to explain several of the calls we did not understand during the tournament. It was our first opportunity to talk with Allison's mother, who recently retired from coaching volleyball at Okemos High School. I realized once again how much the parents give when they follow the team during the season.

I just checked the SOC Web site and the volleyball section of the MSU site. I encourage you to look at these on a regular basis. The MSU site has some great pictures and you can learn what Katie Johnson's favorite ice cream is and how Tracy Bellwood prepares for a match in addition to other excellent information.

Remember that we need volunteers for SOC activities—check the membership table at the next match to sign up or to get more information. Know that the SOC Board is always interested in your suggestions and comments. See you at a match soon.

Go State! Go MSU volleyball!

*Jenny Bond*

### Wear Your Shirts!

Friday, September 22 kicks off the Big Ten home season against Purdue. Let's show our support by wearing our SideOut Club t-shirts. With the Blockheads at one end of the floor, the Building Blocks at the other and SideOut members on each side, let's show the team our support. Remember – Sept 22 – Shirt Night!

## Statistics Primer: Part One—by Chris Wolf

*(A special thanks to Chris Wolf for this outstanding contribution. Chris played competitive volleyball for twenty years in area leagues and tournaments, including sand doubles and grass triples in addition to indoor volleyball. He currently runs the SideOut Club web site and also compiles Big Ten standings, national polls and match results to create the poster displayed at every home match. During the high school season, he and Cathy Caswell are the scorekeepers for East Lansing High School home matches.)*

Many volleyball fans, even long-time ones, don't completely understand all of the statistics shown in a box score or a team stats summary. In a series of articles, we will explain where the numbers come from and what they mean.

### Scorekeeper vs. Statistician

The first thing to know is the difference between the scorekeeper and the statistician. The official scorekeeper for a match sits at the scorer's table behind the second referee, along with the announcer, the scoreboard operator, the facility manager and others. The official scoresheet for volleyball records information necessary for the officials to run the match (which player served, the outcome of each serve, the substitutions that have occurred, etc.). Unlike a sport such as baseball, the official scoresheet does not contain any information that is useful for statistics.

The statistician does not have a designated spot at the match, but usually sits at the end of the court in a relatively high position for a good view of the court. This position gives the best view of the plays as they occur, as well as the numbers on players' jerseys.

The scorekeeper is a member of the officiating crew defined in the NCAA rules and must be certified for this role. A match cannot be conducted without a scorekeeper. The statistician, on the other hand, is not a game official and is only mentioned in passing in the rulebook.

Both tasks are demanding, but in many ways the job of statistician is more difficult. For example, everything that the scorekeeper records on the scoresheet is signaled by the officials, and all of it occurs while the ball is dead. The statistician has to observe for herself exactly which player makes each play and must record many events, such as digs and attacks, every single time the ball crosses the net.

At most schools, the assistant sports information director handles the job of statistician, with one or more assistants. Emily Feeney fills these shoes at MSU.

### Games Played

We'll start with the easiest statistic, which also happens to be the first one normally listed. The left-most column of the box score is labeled GP, which is the abbreviation for games played. The only thing that might not be obvious about this statistic is that it doesn't matter how long a player is actually in the game or, for example, whether she plays only the back row. If she enters the game at any time, even for only one rally, it counts as one game played. This number by itself is only occasionally interesting; it's actually most important when it's used to calculate per-game averages for other statistics, such as kills or aces.

### Hitting Percentage

Next on the box score are four columns measuring offensive efforts. Perhaps the most familiar of these is the hitting percentage (PCT), which is expressed as a three digit decimal like a baseball batting average. This is a calculated number, based on the three preceding columns: kills (K), attack errors (E), and total attack attempts (TA). The formula for hitting percentage is kills minus errors divided by total attack attempts, or  $PCT = (K-E)/TA$ .

For example, a player who got 20 kills during 40 attempts with no errors, would have a hitting percentage of  $(20-0)/40$ , or .500. If she had the same number of kills and attempts, but had 8 errors, her hitting percentage would go down to  $(20-8)/40$ , or .300.

So how does the statistician watching the match determine the numbers that go into the formula?

### Attack Attempts

An attack attempt (also known simply as an attempt) occurs when a player tries to hit the ball strategically over the net *in an effort to score a point*. When identifying an attempt, the player's aggressive intent is crucial—if the ball is played over the net simply to keep it in play, it is not an attack attempt. Thus, a volleyball statistician must always be judging intent when tallying attacks.

Some examples of hits that are not attack attempts:

- A serve reception (pass) that crosses the net and goes out of bounds or is kept in play by the serving team
- A hit resulting from a bad set, where the hitter is only trying to keep the ball in play
- A broken play where no set is made, and the final hit over the net is a free ball

## Statistics Primer —cont from page 6

### Kills

A player is credited with a kill any time a ball played over the net earns a point for the player's team *as a direct outcome of the hit itself*. This specifically includes any situation where the opponents commit a fault while trying to block the hit.

Some examples of kills:

- A hit that contacts the opponent's court
- A hit that contacts an opposing blocker or digger and goes out of bounds
- A hit that is dug by the opponents but not kept under control, where the team has to scramble to try to keep it in play and ultimately fails to get it back over the net
- A hit where an opposing blocker touches the net or crosses the center line

Any time a player is awarded a kill, she is also awarded an attack attempt, even if the play otherwise might not have qualified as an attempt. For example, in 1998 a Wisconsin player hit a hard attack down the line that bounced off Christie Landry's shoulder, went over the net and landed in the Wisconsin court for a point. If Wisconsin had kept that ball in play, Christie's play would not have been counted as an attempt, since she was not trying to score a point when she played it. However, because it did result in a point, it was a kill, and thus automatically became an attempt as well.

### Errors

An attack error is the opposite of a kill—an attack attempt that results in a point for the opponents. This can happen in one of two ways:

- The player making an attack attempt commits a fault of any kind, such as hitting the ball out of bounds, touching the net, hitting the ball into the net, or carrying the ball
- An attack is blocked by the opponents and as a result cannot be kept in play by the attacker's team

Notice that errors are subtracted from kills in the computation of hitting percentage. This means that unlike a batting average, a hitting percentage can be negative. Going back to our hypothetical player with 40 attempts, suppose she had ten kills, but also had twelve errors. Her hitting percentage would be  $(10-12)/40$  or  $-.050$ . (Of course, this would tell us that her setter was either desperate or not paying attention during the match; if the hitter was having that much trouble on offense, she probably shouldn't have gotten 40 sets!)

### Neutral Attacks

Any attack attempt that is not a kill or an error is considered a neutral attack. Neutral attacks don't enter directly into the calculation of hitting percentage, but they sort of "complete the picture". They are all of the attacks that are kept in play, usually by a dig that keeps the ball under control or by a block back into the attacker's court that is kept in play. Roughly 45% of all attacks in women's college volleyball are neutral attacks.

### Kills Per Game

A commonly-published calculated statistic (that does not appear on a box score) is kills per game (KPG), which, of course, is calculated from the player's total kills (K) divided by the number of games played (GP). If our hypothetical player with 20 kills accomplished this over the course of four games, she would have an average of 5 KPG

### Statistics by Position

The position that a player plays has a strong influence on her hitting statistics, regardless of how good she is.

The players who get the most kills per game are consistently the outside hitters. The top outside hitters will average 4.5 KPG or higher, with the nation's best averaging above 5.0 for a season. The simple reason for this is that they get more attempts. The easiest set to execute is a high ball to the outside; a decent setter can do this from almost anywhere on the court. A middle set requires precise timing and placement, so setters usually won't try it unless the pass is very good. As a result, middle hitters normally don't get as many attempts. Among the Spartan's historical season leaders in kills per game, the top nine are all outside hitters. The all-time best was Jenna Wrobel in 1998 with 5.94 KPG, which led the nation that year. Among current players, Katie Johnson's 4.95 KPG from last year is tops, ranking fourth in MSU history.

In hitting percentages, the statistical leaders are almost always middle hitters, with the best averaging above .350 for a season. Elite middle hitters will average above .400. The quick attacks commonly used for middle hitters are very difficult to defend. In contrast, a high set to an outside hitter gives the opponents time to get two blockers up and diggers into position. This produces a higher success rate for middle attacks. Again looking at MSU season leaders, we find that eight of the top ten hitting percentages belong to middle hitters. Val Sterk holds the top spot with her nation's-best percentage of .449 in 1996. Among more recent players, Jenny Rood achieved a .346 mark in 2003, good for the fifth all-time spot for Spartans.

## FALL SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Opponent-Big Ten	Time
Fri	09/22/2005	PURDUE	7:00 PM
Sat	09/23/2006	INDIANA	5:00 PM
Fri	09/29/2006	@Wisconsin	8:00 PM
Sun	10/01/2006	@Minnesota	2:00 PM
Fri	10/06/2006	ILLINOIS	7:00 PM
Sat	10/07/2006	NORTHWESTERN	8:00 PM
Wed	10/11/2006	@Michigan	7:00 PM
Sat	10/14/2006	IOWA	7:00 PM
Fri	10/20/2006	@Ohio State	7:00 PM
Sat	10/21/2006	@Penn State	7:00 PM
Fri	10/27/2006	@Northwestern	8:00 PM
Sat	10/28/2006	@Illinois	8:00 PM
Fri	11/03/2006	MINNESOTA	7:00 PM
Sat	11/04/2006	WISCONSIN	7:00 PM
Fri	11/10/2006	@Indiana	8:00 PM
Sat	11/11/2006	@Purdue	8:00 PM
Fri	11/17/2006	PENN STATE	7:00 PM
Sat	11/18/2006	OHIO STATE	7:00 PM
Wed	11/22/2006	MICHIGAN	7:00 PM
Fri	11/24/2006	@Iowa	8:00 PM

### Non-Conference Schedule

8/25-8/26—Ball State Nike/Active Ankle Weekend, Muncie IN  
 8/25 MSU vs IPFW—W,3-1  
 8/26 MSU vs Xavier—W, 3-0  
 8/26 MSU vs Ball State—W,3-0

9/1-9/2—MSU Invitational—home  
 9/1 MSU vs Eastern Michigan—W,3-0  
 9/2 MSU vs Miami (Florida)—W,3-0  
 9/2 MSU vs Villanova—W,3-0

9/8-9/9 @ Columbus, Ohio  
 MSU vs Arizona State—4:30pm  
 MSU vs Tennessee Tech—3:30pm

9/12 (Tues) - Oakland—home—7:00pm  
 9/16 (Sat) - Toledo—home—7:00pm

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



P.O. Box 80491  
 Lansing, MI 48908