

**Volleyball news from the MSU SideOut Club**

## Cathy's Corner

Sideout Club,

Although it has been quite awhile since our season has ended, I often use this time of year to reflect on where we've been, where we are, and where we would like to go. I can't help but smile when I think of all of you and would like to once again thank you for all the support you gave us during this past season. The success of this season can clearly be traced back to the hard work and efforts of many throughout the past three years. It is because of this success that the returning players have come into this off season with a vengeance!

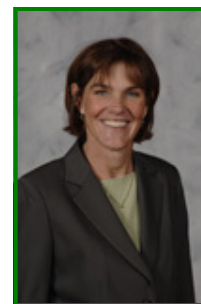
After 5-6 weeks of individual training, weight training, jump training and conditioning, the team is looking forward to begin the full team practice phase of the non-traditional

segment. During this phase, the NCAA allows us to play in 4 separate tournaments. (Please check below for those dates and locations.)

Obviously it will not be easy to replace our four seniors but we are tackling that challenge daily with great work ethic and determination. In addition, the future looks bright as we will add five players to our roster this fall with four out of five being named All-American in the past year!! Once again we would like to thank you for your support. We hope to see you out this spring at some of our tournaments!

Go Green!

*Cathy*



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## 2008 Spring Tournament Schedule

March 29th

Dunes Volleyball Club Invitational—Rolling Prairie, IN

April 5th

Eastern Michigan Spring Tournament

April 12th

MSU Spring Tournament—hosted at the MAC

April 19th

GLC College Invitational—Aurora, IL

## MSU INKS 4 ALL AMERICANS IN 2008!

### KYNDRA ABRON - 6'3" OH/MB Livonia, Michigan



Kyndra was named a high school All-American by prepvolleyball.com is one of the most highly-touted high school volleyball seniors in the state of Michigan. Abron, an outside hitter, was recently tabbed "Miss Volleyball 2007" by the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association (MIVCA), following up her first-team all-state, all-region and all-conference accolades earlier in the season. Nationally, she is ranked No. 14 on prepvolleyball.com's "Senior Aces" list, and was also selected to the USA Volleyball National A2 team. As a junior, Abron led Livonia Churchill to the Michigan Class A State title, posting 35 kills in the title game, a Class A championship game record. In addition to her senior year honors, she was a MIVCA First Team All-State selection as a junior and an honorable mention choice as a sophomore. Additionally, as a sophomore and a junior, Abron was first team all-region, all-conference and academic all-state. She currently competes with the M-Junior Volleyball Club.

"Kyndra has amazing athletic potential," said George. "She will dominate matches in Green and White, as she continues to develop her game."

### NATALIE EMRO - 6'2" S/RS Lafayette, Missouri

Natalie was named a high school All-American by prepvolleyball.com was recognized on its "Senior Aces" list, placing No. 33 nationally. Emro led the St. Louis metro area in assists as a senior, averaging 10.62 per game, earning her First Team All-State honors. The 6'2" lefty also garnered all-conference, all-region and all-district first team honors, while leading Lafayette to a third-place finish at the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) 4A State Championships this season. As a junior, she shared team most valuable player honors and accepted first team all-conference, all-district and all-regions acknowledgments. In her sophomore year, Emro won a USA Volleyball National Championship in the 16-National Division and earned All-American team honors in the process. Additionally as a sophomore, she trained with the USA Volleyball Youth National Team. Emro is currently a member of the Team St. Louis Volleyball Club in St. Louis, Mo.



"Natalie combines athleticism, size, desire and playing ability, which will allow her to have a major impact in the Big Ten," said George. "Her ability to set and attack makes her a multi-dimensional weapon that will be difficult to defend."

### CARLI WEILER - 5'6" L/DS Oak Lawn, Illinois



Carli was named a high school All-American by prepvolleyball.com and finished her high school career as one of the top liberos in the nation. She was honored by PrepVolleyball.com as one of the top-five liberos in the country and named to their "Defensive Dandies" list. As a senior Weiler anchored the Mother McAuley defense with 553 digs and lead them to a second-place finish at the Illinois Class 4A State Championship. After the season, she was named first team all-state, and first team all-conference and all-area, the same honors she had received as a junior, when she posted 473 digs. She is part of the 1st Alliance Volleyball Club in Chicago. Off the court, Weiler has been an "A" and "B" honor roll student in each semester of high school.

"Carli brings a wealth of volleyball experience and competitive attitude to our team," said George. "Her passing and defensive abilities will help solidify our ball control in 2008 and beyond. Spartan fans will love watching her make defensive plays look easy."

### BECCA ZLABIS - 5'11" OH Wheaton, Illinois

Becca was named an All American at the 2007 Junior Olympic National tournament and was also a member of prepvolleyball.com's "Senior Aces" compilation, ranked No. 73 in the nation. A three-year letter winner at Wheaton Warrenville South, Zlabis earned first team all-conference and all-area honors as both a junior and a senior, along with being named the school's "Offensive Player of the Year" three times. During her sophomore year, Zlabis helped lead the Sports Performance 16-Elite team to the USA Volleyball 16-Open National Championship, starting every match at outside hitter. She currently competes for the Sports Performance Volleyball 18-Elite team out of Aurora, Ill. An all-academic selection, Zlabis boasts a cumulative grade point average of 4.4 and has been a member of the honor roll in every semester.

"Becca is a perfect addition to the Michigan State roster," said George. "She is a six-rotation player who combines athleticism, passing, defense and shot-making ability to make her a solid all-around player, who can draw on her ex-



## Schatzle Garners All-American Honors in '07

In addition to being named First -Team All Big Ten, All Mid-East Region, and to the NCAA Madison Regional All-Tournament team, Senior Ashley Schatzle was recognized as a Third-Team All American by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA). Schatzle is among elite company as the 6th All-American in MSU Volleyball history as she joins Dana Cooke (1995, First Team), Val Sterk (1995, 1996 First Team), Jenna Wrobel (1998 First Team), Erin Hartley (2001 Second Team), and Kim Schram (2003 Honorable Mention) as the only Spartans to receive the honor. Ashley's 2007 season kill total of 553 ranks 5th in the MSU Record books and her 1,419 kills rank her 8th on the all-time career list. Rather than pursue a professional volleyball career, Ashley will stay at MSU and continue to work on her Nursing degree.



Senior All-American  
Ashley Schatzle

## Spring 2008 Outlook

This Spring, the Spartans will look to many different players to carry the offensive load. Fans can expect to see Jenilee Rathje, Megan Schatzle, and Lisa Naymick on the left and right side, Vanessa King, Mischelle Nelson, and Vineece Verdun in the middle, Lauren O'Reilly setting, and Heather McDaniel and Allyson Karaba playing defensive roles. We will start our spring season after spring break and will travel to 3 tournaments March 29 (Dunes VBC in Rolling Prairie, IN), April 5th at Eastern Michigan, and April 19 (GLC Invitational in Aurora, IL).

On **April 12**, we will be HOSTING a spring tournament at the Michigan Athletic Club on Hagadorn Ave. in East Lansing, MI. Please note that this tournament will NOT be at the Jenison Field House. We'd love to see you there!

## Johnson Signs Pro Contract in Korea

Playing over here in Korea is certainly the most difficult challenge I have faced so far in my life. I think one thing that has made it so tough is leaving such a tight-knit team. Going from being best friends with my teammates to barely even being able to speak to them makes this such a challenge. I know that even though I am learning so much about the game, I am also learning so much about life and myself. I am thankful for this opportunity.

The only other thing that I would want people to know is how much I appreciate what the Michigan State program has done for me. Being over here and seeing what these girls have to go through everyday makes me appreciate what MSU has given to me. I am so thankful that I had the wonderful opportunity to be a Spartan and I couldn't be more proud of that.

My team here is just finishing our fifth round (out of seven). We are battling for third place. We are getting better game by game. We have some injuries that have hurt us a bit, but I really think that we are beginning an upswing. Our main goals as a team right now are to take things game by game and prepare for each match the best we can. Also, we keep our focus on making it to the playoffs (the top three teams make the playoffs). As far as personal goals, I just want to take in as much of this as I can. As a foreigner here, there is a lot of pressure on me to do well. I have really been working hard with three practices a day. I am trying to change my game into the Korean way and I would say that that has been the most difficult part. Their style is so much different so I am just trying to adapt to that. My main focus is working hard and doing anything that I can to help the team.

"We're David,  
they're  
Goliath. Now  
grab a rock,  
cause we're  
going to pick a  
fight."

Part of pre-game speech  
before #2 Nebraska



## Reflections—Miken Trogdon



Our 2007 MSU Volleyball season was definitely a season of highs and lows, but I believe as a player that if you fall down hard, it makes it that much more gratifying to get back up and walk tall. I think that's what happened to us this season. We didn't start out the way we wanted to or how we had anticipated, but I think that our finest hour came when we, as a team, looked each other in the eyes and said "Let's buckle down, get together, and accomplish what we want this season—we are the only ones with the power to do it, so let's make it happen." That was where our season turned and we became a team ultimately bound for the Sweet 16.

Our season was full of great highlights that are the best memories of my lifetime: rolling into Wisconsin and, in true "Green Fog" fashion, beating the Badgers in 4 before they knew what hit them; finding a racquetball court in the field house at Dayton and inventing an incredibly intense game called "Balls to the Wall"; or taking revenge on the University of Michigan by beating them on our home floor after an upsetting loss in Ann Arbor earlier in the season; another was rolling up a ball of tape at the University of Iowa and making up yet another game in a five-foot wide hallway; another, silencing a hostile arena full of Dayton fans who watched us hand their team its first loss of the year on their home floor. Perhaps one memory that remains most vividly is going into the locker room up 2-0 on Nebraska during the Sweet 16: Ashley Schatzle and I sat next to each other, looked each other in the eye, and she said "I've got goose bumps already."

I think that's what drove our team, day in and day out: the fact that no one really expected us to be successful after our rocky start, yet we knew we had what it took to be a top team. We set out each practice, each match, to show people what we were made of. We had to have guts, and we had to be willing to come in every time and just work, work, work. There were times when we definitely should have felt fear or questioned ourselves—but we didn't. We were each other's rocks, and I think that feeling of solidarity started among we four seniors and spread throughout the entire team. It didn't matter how old you were, or how much experience you had; we were a family, and it always inspires you to give a little more when you are playing alongside your sister.

As a player, I always dreamed of playing on the national stage, as almost all collegiate players do. As my career progressed, I began to articulate better and better each year the goal I held in my heart for our team each coming season. I feel so very blessed (and I know the other seniors agree) to have been able to extend our season into the Sweet 16 with this particular group of girls. Yes, it is nice to experience the longest post-season run of your career as a senior, but more importantly, this is the most special group of girls I have ever played with. Sharing this experience with this particular team is what has made all of our accomplishments so dear to my heart.

As for the future, I cannot wait to come back in years to come and watch my sisters play. This year, we all worked together to reestablish Michigan State as a top 25 team, and I know that the remaining girls and incoming freshmen have exactly what it takes to carry on the Green & White tradition. They know how to work hard, love each other, give for each other, and be a family, and that is the foundation that builds a successful team. We will undoubtedly be very talented, but the fact that we will also be sisters will already put us ahead of our competition—because no one messes with family. =)



*Miken*

## 2007 NCAA TOURNAMENT

The Michigan State Volleyball Team, coaches, and administration sat in nervous anticipation watching the NCAA Tournament selection show, waiting for their name to be called. In the last Regional announced, MSU was announced to face Kentucky in the Dayton Sub-Regional. The team looked at the bracket and quickly realized that two wins would match them up against defending National Champion Nebraska, but that thought was quickly silenced by the thought of the work ahead of them.

After a short but productive week of practice, the Sparties headed to Dayton for the first two rounds of the NCAA tournament. MSU weathered nerves and an early Kentucky lead to steal game one by the score of 30-28. The Spartans would go on to find their stride in games two and three, disposing of Kentucky in straight games. Outside hitters Katie Johnson and Ashley Schatzle would combine for 80 swings and 34 kills, but it was the efficiency of the other attackers Jess Hohl (.333 Hitting %), Jenilee Rathje (.438 Hitting %), and newly starting Mischelle Nelson (.500 Hitting %) that kept the offense balanced.

The Spartans had a quick turnaround to play the hosting #15 University of Dayton with a record of 33-1. Again, the Spartans got off to a slow start, trailing 10-15 in game one. From that point on the Spartan block and offense would take over the match. After winning game one, MSU did not take its foot off the pedal only allowing Dayton 16 and 22 points in the final two games. The Spartans earned their second sweep in as many nights by out blocking the Dayton Flyers 16-5. Freshman Lauren O'Reilly ran the offense with impressive efficiency leading the team to .333 hitting percentage for the match. MSU volleyball was headed to the Sweet 16 to face Nebraska.

The confidence of the Spartans was to be tested by the daunting enormity of the challenge in front of them. As it turned out Dayton had the last laugh, as the majority of the MSU team and staff came down with food poisoning from the post match meal, forcing the team to chose health and rest and cancel practice. Also, Big 10 All-Freshman team middle blocker Vanessa King had not played in over 2 weeks after suffering an ankle injury. Then, in the teams only full practice before leaving for Wisconsin, senior middle Jess Hohl severely rolled her ankle rendering her highly doubtful to play against Nebraska.

Both ailing middles not only dressing but starting the match gave the team an early boost. Nebraska was not ready for the fight that MSU brought to them, and the Spartans kept up the pace closing out game one with a straight down stuff block against 4 time All-American rightside Sarah Pavan. Game 2 was more of the same, as the Cornhuskers showed no signs of slowing down the Spartan attack, and the Spartans took a 2-0 lead into the break.

One game from being defeated, Nebraska came out firing, and won Game 3 handedly. MSU did not back down and set their sights on defeating Nebraska in the 4<sup>th</sup> game. A close game throughout the Spartans found themselves down 26-28, but just as they had done all season they fought back to tie the game at 28-28 just two points from the Elite 8. Nebraska rallied after a late timeout earn the next kill and closed the game out with a service ace. The Spartans missed their chance in game 4 and were behind so early in game 5 that their chance had passed. It was a good showing for the Spartans against the #2 ranked Cornhuskers, but being that close and falling short was difficult for the team to accept, and the tears in the locker room reflected the reality of a fantastic journey that had come to an end.





Volleyball news from the MSU  
Sideout Club

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## 2007 Award Winners

Sideout Club Service Award \_\_\_\_\_ Jenny Bond

Big Ten Sportsmanship Award \_\_\_\_\_ Miken Trogdon

2007 Big Ten Player of the Week \_\_\_\_\_ Jenilee Rathje (Defensive, 8/31/07)  
Lauren O'Reilly (Offensive, 10/22/07)  
Jess Hohl (Defensive, 11/26/07)

All Big Ten, NCAA Regional Team \_\_\_\_\_ Katie Johnson

3rd Team All-American, All Big Ten, All Mid-East Region, NCAA Regional Team \_\_\_\_\_ Ashley Schatzle

Kirkby Scholar Athlete Award \_\_\_\_\_ Lisa Naymick

Academic All-Big Ten \_\_\_\_\_ Jess Hohl, Heather McDaniel, Mischelle Nelson,  
Lisa Naymick, Ashley Schatzle, Miken Trogdon

Blue Collar Award (Weight Room) \_\_\_\_\_ Jenilee Rathje

Unsung Hero Award \_\_\_\_\_ Mischelle Nelson

Most Improved Award \_\_\_\_\_ Lauren O'Reilly

Defensive Player of the Year Award \_\_\_\_\_ Miken Trogdon

Offensive Player of the Year Award \_\_\_\_\_ Katie Johnson

Coach's Award \_\_\_\_\_ Jess Hohl

Most Valuable Player \_\_\_\_\_ Ashley Schatzle