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Special thank you to Peter Morris for article submissions.

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## National Women and Girls in Sport Day

On February 3, the Michigan State volleyball team joined the other eleven women's varsity sports teams at Breslin Student Events Center in taking part in the thirtieth annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Prior to the women's basketball game versus Michigan, players and coaches were on hand in the concourse to greet fans and allow those who wished to do so to participate in sport specific activities. Each of the teams were also recognized at halftime, and some of the student-athletes also took part in the day's promotions by tossing t-shirts and miniature balls into the stands. (As a season ticket holder who sits too far up to be able to snare these items during most games, I particularly appreciated the strong arms of those student-athletes!)



Players Sarah Washegesic, Autumn Christenson, and Chloe Reing signing autographs.

### Spring Schedule: Get Your Volley Fix!

#### March 19th—Aquinas—Grand Rapids, MI

1:00pm  Vs. 

2:30pm  Vs. 

6:30pm  Vs. 

#### March 25th—Premier Academy—Maumee, OH

7:30pm  Vs. 

April 9th—OVVC—Louisville, KY  
OVVC Spring Collegiate Tournament

April 16th—Jenison Field House  
MSU Spring Home Tournament

The first National Girls and Women in Sports Day took place on February 3, 1987, and paid tribute to volleyball legend Flo Hyman, who had died of Marfan syndrome less than two years after leading the United States to a silver medal at the 1984 Olympic Games. In the years since the inaugural event, it has expanded to become both a celebration of the past and a recognition of current sporting achievements of girls and women. A new theme is chosen each year and the events are organized around that theme. As the Big Ten Conference explains, "This year's NGWSD theme, Leading the Way, is a nod to all those individuals and organizations that are on the front line for girls and women in sports: the organizations committed to advancing women's issues, athletes who have overcome barriers, coaches who challenge their teams to succeed, girls who have faith in their own po-

tential and all those who continue to use the power of example to inspire greatness."

Michigan State has long commemorated National Girls and Women in Sports Day during a women's basketball game, but since several other women's sports are in season in February, this year marked the first time that all women's varsity teams were able to take part. In another coincidence, the Michigan State-Michigan game had originally been scheduled for February 4, but was moved ahead by one day when Winter Storm Jonas forced MSU's game at Maryland to be rescheduled. As a result, this year's thirtieth anniversary event fell exactly on the anniversary of the original event. To complete a successful day, the MSU women's basketball team handily beat their archrivals, setting a school record in the process by making all 19 free throw attempts.

## 2015 Banquet Recap

The volleyball banquet is an annual opportunity to reflect back on the successes of the season and bid adieu to our graduating seniors. This year's banquet took place at the Kellogg Center on Sunday, January 10th, in front of a large crowd that was undeterred by several inches of fresh snow. Former voice of MSU Volleyball John Kreger did his usual capable job as emcee.

Award winners were as follows:

**Megan Tompkins** was the recipient of the Playmaker Award for her knack of sparking MSU runs.

**Autumn Christenson** received the Extra Mile Award for her gritty determination in overcoming injuries and providing a spark of energy whenever she came onto the court.

**Brooke Kranda** earned the Most Improved Award for her stellar play while filling in on the left side.

**Maggie Halloran** received the Kirkby Scholar-Athlete Award for the third straight season. Having maintained a perfect 4.0 cumulative grade-point average throughout her MSU career, she is only one semester away from breaking Michaela Kopka's program record of 3.99.

**Halle Peterson** earned the Most Inspirational Award for her leadership as team captain and was also honored with the Big Ten Sportsmanship Award from MSU.

**Rachel Minarick** was named Team MVP in recognition of a standout season that included being named Big Ten Setter of the Week three times and recording the program's first triple-double since 2006.

**Jan Holcomb**, a longtime loyal supporter of



many MSU sports teams, was the recipient of the Sideout Club Service Award.

In addition, no fewer than seven players were honored with the Academic All-Big Ten Award: Allyssah Fitterer, Alyssa Garvelink, Rachel Minarick, Chloe Reinig, and all three seniors, Maggie Halloran, Kristen Muir, and Halle Peterson. Recipients of the Academic All-Big Ten Award must record a target cumulative GPA while being in at least their second year at that school.

As always, the highlight of the banquet came when the three seniors reflected back on their careers at Michigan State and paid tribute to the many people who made their successes possible. The futures of these three seniors are just as bright. Maggie will be graduating in the spring and has been accepted into Vanderbilt University's Women's Health Nurse Practitioner program (a two-year accelerated program).

Kristen will also be graduating in the spring and has already accepted a position with Deloitte as an Incoming Business Risk Advisory Consultant. Halle will be graduating in the spring of 2017 and plans to go to graduate school in Speech Language Pathology to become a speech-language pathologist. Nobody who has met these three fine young women has any doubts that they will succeed in their chosen professions.



## Farewell to Mike Gawlik—It's Not a Goodbye, it's a See You Later

Associate Head Coach Mike Gawlik left the Michigan State family on January 28th to become the Head Coach at Central Michigan. Mike arrived in East Lansing in the fall of 2005 immediately after graduating from the University of Pacific, where he had been a four-year starter and two-year captain of the men's volleyball team. He served as volunteer assistant coach during his first season at MSU, but when Ron Arenz left to take a head coaching position, Mike was elevated to a full-time assistant coaching position. When Russ Carney retired after last season, Mike was promoted to the position of Associate Head Coach.

Throughout his years at MSU, Mike demonstrated a knack for offering instruction on the finer points of volleyball, back-row defensive play in particular. At the same time, his quick wit and good-natured sense of humor were invaluable in keeping things on an even keel. In Mike's ten years as a full-time assistant, MSU reached the NCAA tournament eight times, including six first-round victories and three trips to the Sweet Sixteen. During his time here, Mike also earned a Master's degree in Athletic Administration and got married to his wife, Katie.

"I look up to Mike a lot, first of all as an unbelievable player and coach, but even more as a role model," says Kori Moster, who twice earned the Big Ten's Defensive Player of the Year Award under Mike's tutelage. "Everyone knows Cathy's level of passion for what she does and Mike has that same passion for enjoying every day to its fullest and making you want to be that way too. He has taught me so many different things about volleyball and about how to be passionate in life. I took away so many lessons from him in four years that translate into life skills, and I'm already seeing a lot of applications as I start my own career.

"My favorite thing about Mike is his ability to bring creativity and combine it with competitive skill. In coaching defenders, some coaches

are extremely technical. What I appreciated most about Mike as a coach was that he had a thorough understanding of the technical aspects, but he still was able to free me up to play the innovative style that I love. He would always draw up a great game plan, but he also knew how to adapt during a game by making just the right adjustment and communicating that to everyone on the fly. I could not be more excited about him getting a head coaching opportunity. I hope every volleyball player at Central Michigan University knows how lucky they are.”

As Kori says, Mike will be greatly missed in East Lansing, but we all wish the best to him and Katie in their new adventure and have no doubt that he will do a great job in Mount Pleasant! Farewell, Mike!

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## Q & A with Mike Gawlik

Soon after taking over as Head Volleyball Coach at Central Michigan University, former MSU Associate Head Coach (and the former editor of this newsletter) Mike Gawlik graciously sat down to talk about his memories of his time in East Lansing.

Q: Was there any particular moment in your first couple of years here where you knew you could make a profession out of coaching?

MG: I'm not sure about a particular moment, but it was clear from the get-go that it was a profession that I wanted to be in. Through all the hard work and long hours, it never really felt like a “job” or “work.” I truly enjoyed coming into the office each day and giving my all to the team in the same way we'd expect our athletes. I would like to add that I have always been very loyal and thankful to Cathy George for hiring full-time me at age 22 (following my volunteer year) when she clearly had a stack of resumes that included candidates with more experience. That might be one of the things that made me really “know” that I could do it – and one of the big reasons I was able to stay around so long. She knew that I was inexperienced, but would work every day to learn what I didn't know. She believed in me when I didn't have a long list of experiences because of what she saw in me as a volunteer coach. When your mentor puts their neck out for you like that – it drives you to make sure you live up to it.

Q: Were there any other breakthrough moments for you in your early years?

MG: I'm not sure it was a breakthrough moment for me per se, but a breakthrough moment for the program was in 2007 when we were able to go in and beat a good Kentucky team in the 1st round of the NCAA Tournament, beat a 33-1 Dayton team on their home floor, and then matched up with a perennial powerhouse of Nebraska in the round of sixteen. We lost in five, but we went toe-to-toe with them. They weren't a conference opponent at the time and had come off winning the national championship the year before. I believe I'm correct when I say that team had five All-Americans Jordan Larson, Tracy Stalls, Rachel Holloway, Sarah Pavan, and Christina Houghtelling (including TWO AVCA Player of the Year award winners – Pavan and Houghtelling) – not to mention a libero that currently starts for the U.S. National Program, Kayla Banworth. Still one of the best matches I thought MSU Volleyball played in my eleven seasons – regardless of the outcome.

Q: What did you learn from Cathy George and Russ Carney that will help you as a head coach?

MG: Nearly everything I know about coaching volleyball can be attributed to Cathy and Russ – their patience with me as a young coach is something I'll never forget and will certainly try to “pay forward” in my career. Cathy's commitment, work ethic, competitiveness, and drive are things that are hard to match. Russ's ability to connect with each player off the court was something I've always admired – it's no wonder than many of the alums refer to him as Papa Russ. Those are definitely things I'd like to emulate.

Q: What will you miss most about East Lansing?

MG: No doubt the answer is the people – the staff, the team, the fans. I truly enjoyed working at MSU and being a part of the athletic department. I'll even miss Kristen Kelsay's singing – which says something. The team is a special group of young women that are bound for great things if they can focus things and stay the course. I'll always bleed a little green and will certainly be a fan from afar, assuming I'm not staring at them through the net on game day!

Q: Can you comment on the culture and success of the MSU Athletic Department?

MG: MSU Athletics has seen so much growth in just my eleven years... the MSU Brand is more identifiable than it has ever been and it's not only because of the success of Football and Men's Basketball – although that helps big time. There's quite a few teams across campus that have seen success and I think it's because prep athletes want to be alongside other athletes that are striving for excellence on the court and in the classroom. Success is contagious. At MSU it's not about twenty-four teams, it's about one team. And I think that shows.

Q: Do you have a funniest memory from your time here?

MG: I really just enjoyed making Cathy laugh hysterically – typically at the expense of a silly thing she did or said. It truly is one of her best qualities – the ability to laugh at herself and have fun while working hard. One time that I goof on her about is when she was feverishly rubbing her hands together, she poked herself in the eye with one of her own thumbs. Or her multi-tasking driving habits that make all her passengers panic.

