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# THE SERVICE LINE

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Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club

Vol. I No. 4

December 1995

# MICHIGAN STATE

1995



*Champions*

# VOLLEYBALL

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Get your tickets now! The MSU Spartans have won the 1995 Big Ten volleyball championship with a 19-1 conference record (31-2 overall), and are heading into the NCAA playoffs.

MSU is seeded sixth in the NCAA tournament, and has been moved to the Mountain region, possibly to meet up with number three seed Hawai'i. The Spartans have a bye for the first round, and will host the second round on Saturday, December 2

at 7:00 pm in Jenison Field House. Tickets for the match will go on sale Wednesday, November 29 at 7:30 am at the Jenison Ticket Office. **All seating will be general admission, but fans are strongly encouraged to purchase tickets in advance.** MSU's opponent will be the winner of the Houston/BYU match held on November 29.

Assuming both MSU and Hawai'i win, MSU will probably travel to Honolulu with two other teams for the regional playoff on December 8-9, with the regional winner advancing to the Final Four. (See the accompanying article explaining the seeding, as well as the full bracket diagram.)

### Season-Ending Victories

MSU closed out their home season in spectacular fashion on November 17 and 18, with back-to-back victories over national No. 8 Penn State and No. 6 Ohio State in Jenison Field House. The Ohio State match, broadcast live by Sports Channel Chicago on regional cable, was played under the Big Ten experimental live TV scoring format. The attendance for that match set a new MSU volleyball record at 4,476, and was also the largest crowd in the Big Ten this season.

MSU went on to win their last two road matches against Purdue and Northwestern on November 24 and 25 to close out the season. The big news

of the final Big Ten weekend was that Illinois upset both Penn State and Ohio State on their home courts, duplicating MSU's feat from October, and thus barely edging out U-M for an NCAA bid.

### Sterk Named Player of the Week

Val Sterk was named NCAA Division I Player of the Week on November 20 for her performance against PSU and OSU. She hit .468 for the weekend, while averaging 5.5 kills, 3.2 digs, and 2.0 blocks per game. This was a fitting bookend to teammate Dana Cooke's Player of the Week award for MSU's road trip against these same two teams in October. The dual awards make MSU the only team in the nation to have two players honored as Player of the Week during 1995.

### Big Ten Final Standings.

MSU's rise from seventh place in the Big Ten in 1994 to the conference championship in 1995 matched the biggest season-to-season turnaround in Big Ten history. In 1988, Ohio State finished seventh and then moved up to win the conference title the following year.

Rank	School	Big Ten (Overall)
1	Michigan State	19-1 (31-2)
2	Ohio State	16-4 (21-7)
3	Penn State	14-6 (26-7)
4	Indiana	12-8 (23-8)
4	Illinois	12-8 (20-13)
6	Michigan	11-9 (17-13)
7	Wisconsin	9-11 (16-15)
8	Minnesota	7-13 (13-17)
9	Purdue	6-14 (8-20)
10	Iowa	3-17 (10-21)
11	Northwestern	1-19 (5-25)

The top five teams in the conference were tapped to play in the NCAA tournament. All but Indiana were seeded in the top 16 nationally. Michigan and Wisconsin have been invited to play in the NIVC post-season tournament.

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### The Service Line

MSU SideOut Club

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### **Wrobel Back in the Lineup**

Jenna Wrobel saw action on Saturday against Northwestern, playing for the first time since suffering an ankle sprain on November 3. "She's been participating in practices, but it was important to get her some match time again before the playoffs start", said Coach Chuck Erbe. Jenna led the Spartans at Northwestern with 15 kills and 12 digs.

## **Big-Ten-Champions Shirts Available from the SideOut Club**

The MSU SideOut Club is commemorating the Big Ten conference championship with new sweatshirts and T-shirts featuring a design similar to the one on the front page of the newsletter. We expect the shirts to be ready by the December 2 playoff match, but the NCAA will not allow us to sell any merchandise at the match.

We know that SideOut Club members will want to buy these shirts and wear them to the match, so we are offering you an opportunity to pick some up on your way to Jenison.

Someone from the Club will be in the Trowbridge Shopping Center parking lot, on the south side along Trowbridge Road near the ATM, before the playoff match on December 2, starting at 5:00 pm and staying until about 6:30 pm.

As usual, we will have sweatshirts for \$30 and T-shirts for \$15. All shirts are grey, with "Michigan State" and the volleyball design in black, and "1995 Big Ten Champions" in green. We're going out of our way to make these available to members, so please stop by to get one of your very own.

## **Annual Meeting and Spartan Volleyball Banquet**

The annual membership meeting of the SideOut Club will be held at 12:00 noon Sunday, January 28, just prior to the Spartan Volleyball Banquet.

We hope to see a large number of members attending the meeting in order to elect members for the Board of Directors, and to provide input to the Board on how to pursue our common goal of supporting MSU women's volleyball.

Included in this newsletter is a flyer for the Spartan Volleyball Banquet. If you plan to attend, please return the form by January 15, and include a phone number so we can confirm your reservation. You do not need to attend the Banquet in order to participate in the meeting.

### **Call for Board Candidates**

There will be four Board seats up for election, and we are currently preparing an election slate. If you are interested in running for a seat on the Board, please contact the Board Secretary Chris Wolf at (517) 332-4353 or wolfc@pilot.msu.edu, preferably before December 31.

## **50/50 Raffles**

Fans who attended any of the last four volleyball matches held in Jenison should have noticed the 50/50 raffle run by the SideOut Club. The Club planned to hold raffles at every home match as the major fund-raising activity for the year, but the approval process, through both MSU and the State of Michigan, took longer than expected.

Under the direction of Dave Pike, the raffles operated very smoothly and produced a net profit of almost \$1,000 for the MSU volleyball program, while making four winners very happy. Tripper's Sports Bar agreed to pay the cost of the ticket production for the last two raffles in exchange for printing Trippers' coupons on the back. Since ticket printing is the single major expense of the raffles, this arrangement will add significantly to the raffle profits.

Perhaps the highlight of the raffles occurred when the November 17th winner returned \$250 of his winnings to the Club in the form of a lifetime membership. That's the kind of winner we like!

## NCAA Division I Seeding

In 1994 the NCAA Division I playoffs expanded to include 48 teams, up from 32 in previous years. As you probably know, this worked to the benefit of MSU, as the team received their first-ever invitation to post-season play. For 1995 the number of teams remains the same, but the seeding process changes significantly.

Seeding has always been controversial in volleyball, because of the historical dominance of West Coast teams. When seeding was done according to national rankings, it tended to produce an all-West-Coast Final Four tournament. A good example of this was the 1985 Final Four, when Stanford, Pacific, USC, and UCLA traveled all the way to Kalamazoo to decide the national champion.

Critics felt that national seeding hindered the growth of volleyball across the country, because the championship held little interest for those outside California. When seeding was performed geographically, it could bring Eastern and Midwest teams into the national limelight, but might result in an early exit for an otherwise outstanding West Coast team, and a less-than-competitive championship match.

Fortunately, we seem to be coming closer to national parity every year. After two years of study, the Division I Women's Volleyball Committee has put into place a new national playoff system for 1995.

The 285 schools with Division I volleyball programs are divided into eight districts (numbered 1 through 8), which feed into four regions—East, Central, Mountain, and Pacific. The winners of 17 athletic conferences (e.g. Big Ten, PAC-10, Big Eight) automatically get playoff bids, regardless of their national rankings. The champions from the remaining conferences (e.g. Ivy League, Metro Atlantic, Patriot) participate in play-in matches to fill seven more automatic

berths. The remaining teams are selected at large, using a "power" index that reflects their win-loss records as well as the strength of their schedules.

The top four teams nationally are seeded into the four regions. If two of the top four teams are in the same region, the lower-ranked of the two is moved to a region that does not contain a top-four team. Then the fifth- through eighth-ranked teams are moved as necessary to create the 1-8, 2-7, 3-6, 4-5 matchups.

The placement of districts into regions will change each year, resulting in some anomalies such as Hawai'i belonging to the Mountain region and Nebraska in the Pacific region.

East Region	
District 1	District 4
Atlantic 10	Southeastern
Big East	Southern
Ivy League	Sun Belt
North Atlantic	Trans America Athletic
Patriot League	
Central Region	
District 2	District 3
Big Ten	Atlantic Coast
Metro Atlantic Athletic	Big South
Mid-America	Colonial Athletic
Midwestern Collegiate	Mid-Eastern Athletic
Northeast	
Mountain Region	
District 6	District 7
Conference USA	Big West
Ohio Valley	Southland
Southwest	Western Atlantic
Southwestern Athletic	
Pacific Region	
District 5	District 8
Big Eight	Big Sky
Mid-Continent	PAC-10
Missouri Valley	West Coast

# 1995 NCAA Playoff Brackets

Below are the complete Division I playoff brackets by region. Matches in the leftmost column are played November 29. Second-round matches (middle column) are played December 2 and 3. Within each region, the four teams that remain after the second round (indicated by the rightmost column) will play on December 7-10 to determine the four regional champions. These four will travel to Amherst MA for the Final Four tournament on December 14-16.

At Amherst, the Mountain region winner will play the Central region and the Pacific will play the East in the two semi-finals.

Numbers in parentheses indicate the top eight seeds. No. 2 seed Nebraska was moved out of the Pacific region (where they would have faced No. 1 Stanford) to the Central, where there was no top-four team. None of the fifth through eighth seeds was allowed to stay in its home region. No.6 seed MSU was moved to the Mountain region to create the 3-6 matchup with Hawai'i.

## Central Region

George Mason	Nebraska (2)	
Indiana		
Georgia Tech		
Siena		
	Penn State	
Maryland	Ohio State	
Miami		
Ball State		
Loyola (Ill.)		
	UCLA (7)	

## Mountain Region

Louisville	Hawai'i (3)	
Central Florida		
UC Santa Barbara		
South Florida		
	Arizona State	
Long Beach State	San Diego State	
Colorado State		
Houston		
Brigham Young		
	Michigan State (6)	

## Pacific Region

Colorado	Stanford (1)	
Northern Iowa		
USC		
North Texas		
	Pacific	
Loyola Marymount	Washington State	
Oral Roberts		
Idaho		
Iowa State		
	Notre Dame (8)	

## East Region

Arkansas State	Florida (4)	
Texas Tech		
South Carolina		
Hofstra		
	Texas A&M	
Georgia	Illinois	
Marshall		
Mid Tennessee State		
George Washington		
	Texas (5)	

## 1995 Spartan Schedule and Results

9/2	W BAYLOR	15-4, 14-16, 15-11, 15-10	10/20	W Ohio State	15-10, 5-15, 15-10, 15-13
	W BOWLING GREEN	15-6, 15-10, 17-15	10/21	W Penn State	14-16, 15-6, 15-10, 13-15, 16-14
9/3	W ILLINOIS STATE	15-13, 12-15, 15-11, 15-3	10/25	W MICHIGAN	15-5, 15-8, 15-10
	W SAN DIEGO STATE	15-7, 15-8, 11-15, 15-8	10/27	W IOWA	15-6, 15-3, 16-14
9/8	W Hofstra	15-12, 15-9, 15-7	10/28	W LOUISVILLE	15-6, 15-8, 15-10
	W San Jose State	15-12, 15-3, 15-3	11/3	W INDIANA	17-15, 15-7, 13-15, 15-12
9/9	L Long Beach	3-15, 15-8, 12-15, 15-10, 13-15	11/4	W ILLINOIS	15-10, 15-2, 7-15, 7-15, 15-13
	W UC Santa Barbara	15-10, 17-15, 15-9	11/10	W Minnesota	15-11, 15-6, 8-15, 15-5
9/15	W MARYLAND	15-2, 15-3, 15-13	11/11	L Wisconsin	3-15, 16-14, 8-15, 12-15
	W CLEVELAND STATE	15-3, 15-4, 15-5	11/17	W PENN STATE	16-14, 15-8, 15-7
	W SOUTH CAROLINA	15-1, 15-1, 15-10	11/18	W OHIO STATE	12-8, 23-19, 19-7
9/20	W CENTRAL MICHIGAN	15-4, 15-9, 15-2	11/24	W Purdue	15-2 15-13 16-14
9/22	W NORTHWESTERN	15-4, 15-6, 15-5	11/25	W Northwestern	15-10 15-8 19-12
9/23	W PURDUE	15-8, 15-4, 15-2	11/29	NCAA 1st round	bye
9/27	W Michigan	15-5, 15-6, 15-13	12/2	NCAA 2nd round	vs. BYU/Houston winner
9/30	W Iowa	15-5, 15-9, 15-17, 15-8	12/8-9	NCAA Regionals	
10/6	W Illinois	21-9, 19-5, 22-4	12/14-16	NCAA Championships	
10/7	W Indiana	15-3, 15-7, 15-12		University of Massachusetts	
10/13	W WISCONSIN	15-4, 15-1, 15-11			
10/14	W MINNESOTA	15-7, 15-7, 15-5			



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