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# The SERVICE LINE

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Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club  
Vol. III No. 2  
October 1997

## Spartans to Play U.S. National Team

The U.S. Women's National team has made several visits to our area over the last decade, but this year's match will be a little different. The national team customarily brings an international opponent along with them, but this time they're coming to play against the Spartans!

The Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids will be the site of the exhibition match, on Tuesday, October 7 at 7:00 pm. Tickets will be available at the door, priced at \$5 for adults and \$3 for youths. Passes for free admission will be available in advance at certain outlets (to be announced) in Grand Rapids.

Although fans in the mid-Michigan area might prefer to host the national team at home, in Jenison Field House, the Michigan State Athletic Department sees the match as the beginning of an outreach program to expand the horizons for MSU sports.

According to Athletic Director Merritt Norvell, "There is a large alumni base in Grand Rapids and this special event gives us the opportunity to take a contest to our fans. It isn't always convenient for fans and alumni in Grand Rapids to travel to our campus

to attend athletic events. Now, we're bringing a team to Grand Rapids so alumni and fans can watch and experience Spartan athletics firsthand."

Of course, this will be something of a homecoming for national team member and former Spartan All-American Val Sterk, a native of Byron Center.

She and the other members of the young squad just completed their second major tournament together, with a second-place finish at the NORCECA Championship. (NORCECA is an acronym for the region that includes North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.) The tournament was won by Cuba, a team that was heavily favored.

The only U.S. losses of the tournament were to Cuba, one in pool play and another in the finals. Cuba won the final 3-1 (15-4, 15-10, 13-15, 15-8), which saw the U.S. playing quite well at times, especially considering their level of inexperience. According to assistant coach Matt McShane, "The team played great...our best match yet as a team. [We] made life a little nervous for the Cuban team throughout the match."

From September 29 through October 29, the national team will play exhibitions against ten top college teams, including Penn State, Nebraska, Texas, Washington State, and others.

### Coach's Luncheons Begin 9/26

The first of four SideOut Club luncheons this season with Coach Chuck Erbe will be held Friday, September 26, the day of the Spartan's opening Big Ten match against Wisconsin. It will be held at Reno's East, in East Lansing, at 11:45 a.m. The cost for lunch was not set at press time, but should be in the range of \$7 to \$8. Be there!

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## Team Notes

► At press time, it appears that MSU's Big Ten opener on September 26 will see the fall of an all-time Spartan volleyball record. Sometime during that match, Veronica Morales will probably become the all-time Spartan kill leader, surpassing the previous record held by Becky Belanger.

► Last year, *The Service Line* told you not to miss MSU's match in Ann Arbor, and as a result, the Spartan fans outnumbered and outcheered the Wolverines that night. (Well maybe the MSU-UM football game in Ann Arbor that day had a little to do with it...)

Anyway, you'll have a chance to do it again on Friday, October 3. As usual, the match is at 7:00 p.m. at Cliff Keen Arena, at the corner of Hoover and State Streets. Parking is behind the arena, off State Street. Let's show them it doesn't take a football game to get Spartan fans to Ann Arbor!

► By the time you read this, the Spartans' starting positions should be pretty well established.

The outside hitters, Jenna Wrobel and Veronica Morales, were never really in question. The only mild surprise is that Chuck has swapped the positions of these two in the rotation, so the left-side alignment is back the way it was in 1995. This change will let Jenna concentrate on her trademark hard cross-court hits, while Veronica will be called on for a more varied offense.

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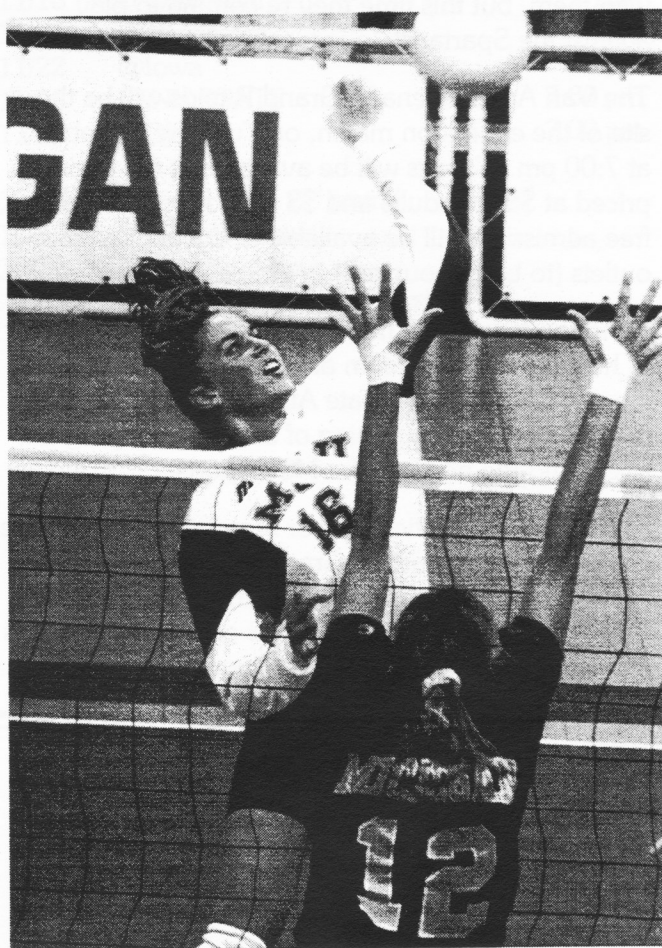
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Although setter Kelly Penney turned in an impressive performance against the Moscow City Volley Club, Vicky Basil will be the starting setter. Middle blocker Lindsey Clayton has been the team's most consistent player this season, and will definitely start at the M2 position.

The other two positions appear to have closer competition. It looks as though we'll be seeing Corie Richard on the right side and Sarah Gustin in the middle, although Christie Landry and Jenny Whitehead can expect to see playing time occasionally in these positions.



Senior Corie Richard is expected to start on the right side

► With MSU's win over Duquesne, Chuck Erbe posted his 400<sup>th</sup> career victory as a college coach.

► The Spartans have a record of 35-3 at Jenison Field House since 1995, and they are 20-0 in Big Ten home matches over that period.

## Big Ten Preview

It may not happen this year, but the Big Ten could soon be recognized as the top volleyball conference in the country. The PAC-10, which has dominated Division I volleyball since its inception, might take issue with this, but they'll have a hard time arguing with Penn State's number one ranking in the AVCA Coach's Poll for four consecutive weeks.

It's not unusual to see four Big Ten teams in the top 25, but this year the conference has also placed seven teams in the top forty, exactly matching the showing of the PAC-10.

Chuck Erbe says all signs are that the conference is only going to get better, adding "This year's Big Ten freshmen represent the best recruiting class in the history of the conference." This should mean we'll see some highly competitive volleyball in Jenison Field House this year.

### Penn State

Penn State has opened the season with what may be the most impressive start by any college volleyball team ever. Their pre-conference record is 11-0, including an amazing five wins against top-ten teams. During that period, Russ Rose's team lost only four games, and out-hit their opponents by over .200.

The Nittany Lions have accomplished this in spite of considerable lineup changes from last year. If their early season lineup continues, we will see only three of the starters from the team that visited Jenison in 1996. Top returnees include All-American middle hitter Terry Zemaitis, and Big Ten Freshman of the Year Bonnie Bremner at setter.

Sophomore Lauren Cacciamani is also back at middle hitter. Coach Russ Rose has been quoted as saying that he thought she had a better year last year than did Zemaitis. There aren't many coaches who can say they have a better-than-All-American!

Carrie Schonveld of Portage, Michigan now starts on the left side, as does Christy Canyon, and Lindsay Anderson, who red-shirted due to injury last season, is playing the right side.

The only dark note for the Lions has been Zemaitis'

bout with shin splints, which caused her to miss two matches.

### Wisconsin

Wisconsin should be fired up after the experience of a lifetime they had this summer. During June and July, they took a three-week tour of Europe, including stays in Vierumaki, Finland, and St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia. For their stay in Moscow, they were hosted by the same Moscow City Volleyball Club that visited MSU a few weeks ago. The Badgers played three matches in Moscow, one of which resulted in an upset of Moscow's top club team.

Back in the States, they got off to a very good 9-1 start, in a schedule that included three top-25 teams.

The big change for the Badgers this year was the graduation of setter Laura Abbinante. Junior Colleen Neels has stepped in for her, joining the five starters from last year.

### Ohio State

Ohio State has to be a little disappointed with their pre-conference season, which produced losses to their only ranked opponents (Nebraska and Maryland), plus a loss to an unranked team (Oral Roberts). As a result they have dropped in ranking since the opening of the season.

Spartan fans should remember OSU's big gun Vanessa Wouters, who was unstoppable in Jenison last year, and who went on to earn Big Ten Player of the Year and first team All America honors. In pre-conference play, Wouters is again the Big Ten kill leader. Andrea Pankova starts opposite Wouters, giving the team a very strong left-side attack.

However, the Buckeyes have had a couple of setbacks after losing only one starter, middle blocker Sherri Helman, to graduation.

Setter Jen Boleyn unexpectedly decided not to play her senior year. She has been replaced by Jen Flynn, who, in an unusual move, switched from outside hitter. Brianne Spiers, the only returning middle, tore an ACL in the spring, and has not yet fully recovered from surgery.

## Indiana

Indiana was ranked eighth in the pre-season Big Ten coaches' poll, so why is *The Service Line* mentioning them here? Well the Hoosiers just may be the conference dark horse this year.

The Hoosiers returned all of their starters, and are off to the best start in team history. They are 13-0 in pre-conference play, which also represents the team's longest winning streak ever. They have played a relatively weak schedule, but they could very well continue into Big Ten play with some upsets of higher ranked teams.

## MSU Volleyball on the Airwaves

Fans who can't attend matches in person will have more opportunities than ever before to hear and see MSU volleyball broadcasts this year. Chuck Erbe says that the goal is to eventually have either a radio or TV broadcast of every volleyball match, whether home or away.

## Local Cable Broadcasts...

Perhaps the biggest news is that 1997 will see the return of MSU volleyball to local cable TV (after a single pilot broadcast several years ago). The tentative schedule calls for the live showing of three home matches on November 2, 7, and 8.

Play-by-play coverage will be provided by Ken Landau, the host of *The Chuck Erbe Show*. Jamie Ianni, volleyball coach at Okemos High School, will provide additional commentary.

It is expected that these will be carried on both TCI Cablevision and MediaOne systems. Check TV listings for channels, or look for details in the next *Service Line*.

## And Radio Too

WJIM radio will also be joining the Spartan bandwagon, with regular volleyball reports and a live broadcast of one match.

At 10 p.m. on every match night, the station will have a 5 minute report on the day's outcome and highlights. Just think—no more hit or miss trying to

see if volleyball makes it into the 11 p.m. TV sports shows! In addition, they are planning a regular two-minute volleyball report during morning drive time.

The live broadcast will bring the October 3 U-M away match to mid-Michigan homes. If you can't travel to Ann Arbor that night, it'll be the next best thing.

## Big Ten

The Big Ten has scheduled a record eleven televised matches for the 1997 season. Unfortunately, most of these are on SportsChannel, which is not available on mid-Michigan cable systems. Three matches will be carried on ESPN2, which will be available to more local residents this fall, as TCI Cable will include this channel in their Basic Plus package as of October 1.

Note that ESPN2 now plans to show MSU's November 28 match vs. Penn State on tape delay, while all other matches will be broadcast live.

As of September 15, the schedule was as follows (all times Eastern p.m.):

Date	Match	Cable	Time
9/28	Illinois @ Michigan State	SC	5:00
10/5	Purdue @ Minnesota	SC	5:00
10/17	Ohio State @ Wisconsin	ESPN2	8:00
10/19	Penn St. @ Northwestern	SC	5:00
10/26	Michigan @ Ohio State	SC	5:00
11/2	Iowa @ Purdue	SC	TBA
11/14	Michigan State @ Illinois	ESPN2	9:00
11/16	Michigan State @ Wisconsin	SC	TBA
11/23	Illinois @ Purdue	SC	TBA
11/28	Penn St @ Michigan State (tape delay)	ESPN2	TBA
11/29	Minnesota @ Illinois	SC	TBA

## The Chuck Erbe Show

For the second season, Playmakers will bring us *The Chuck Erbe Show* each Sunday, starting September

28. This year the show moves to 11:30 a.m. on WLNS channel 6. Ken Landau will continue as host of the only regularly scheduled show in the country devoted to college volleyball.

### New Format for NCAA Playoffs

The NCAA will alter its Division I tournament format this year. Most significantly, the brackets have been expanded to include 56 teams. (As recently as 1993, the tournament was limited to only 32 teams, after which it was upped to 48 for the last few years.)

Also new this year, the first two rounds will be treated as a subregional to be played at one host school. Some coaches think it will be an interesting format. Penn State's Russ Rose noted, "I think it will hurt attendance a little the first night, but it will make scouting easier and there will be more second round upsets due to the fact that the visiting teams will already be acclimated to the gym, with an NCAA win under their belts. Nothing makes you more confident than winning."

### MSU Breaks into the Top 10 in Attendance

Thanks to you, attendance at MSU volleyball matches jumped 50% in 1996, enough to move us into sixth place nationally. The total attendance for 15 matches was 35,867 for an average of 2,391 fans per match. This compares with a 1995 average of 1,590, and 626 in 1994.

The popularity of women's volleyball was on the rise everywhere, with records set across the nation. Total attendance at women's college volleyball matches surpassed four million for the first time. The largest crowds were found at Division I schools, which set a new record as two million people squeezed through the turnstiles.

The University of Hawai'i continued their astounding pace, setting new overall records for the third year in a row. They attracted an average of 8,378 fans per match, which was more than double the average for second-place Nebraska. The Rainbow Wahine boasted two sellouts of 10,225, and their 22 matches accounted for all but one of the top 23 crowds of the

season nationally.

Thanks to the huge numbers put up by Hawai'i (184,314 total attendance), the Western Athletic Conference led all Division I conferences in attendance by drawing 293,585 during the 1996 season. The Big Ten finished second at 210,022. However, our conference dominated the top ten, placing four schools in those elite ranks, and also had more top-20 schools (6) than any other conference. Of those, only number 5 Illinois placed higher than Michigan State.

	School	Matches	Total	Avg.
1	Hawai'i	22	184,314	8,378
2	Nebraska	17	61,014	3,589
3	Texas	14	38,126	2,723
4	Illinois State	16	40,552	2,535
5	Illinois	13	31,381	2,414
6	Michigan State	15	35,867	2,391
7	Florida	18	42,656	2,370
8	Wisconsin	14	31,057	2,218
9	Minnesota	14	26,377	1,884
10	Stanford	16	29,491	1,843

### Minor Rules Changes for 1997

There are no changes in the rules of play for NCAA women's matches this year, but there are a few technical changes you may (or may not) notice.

- ▶ A replay can now be awarded when personnel or equipment from the media (typically photographers) interfere with play.
- ▶ When teams are sharing the court during warmups, there will be a "safety" area lengthwise in the center of the court, which basically means no middle hitting during this time. No one can be in this area except a setter and a tosser. Hitting between games will always take place into each team's own court.
- ▶ Coaches are now allowed to stand during play for an unlimited amount of time, as long as they are not disruptive. The old rules required them to be seated

except for very brief periods.

► Prior to the match, the home team will designate which bench they will occupy to start the match. That choice is no longer dependent on the pre-match coin toss.

► Bands and sound systems are now instructed to cease play when the first referee prepares to beckon for serve.

► Flags are now recommended, but still not required, for use by line judges.

## The Referee's Stand

*This semi-regular column is intended to cover the rules of the game for both newcomers and long-time fans. Last year's three installments dealt with the duties of officials, the positions of players on the court, and back-row blocking and attacking.*

One of the most common faults in volleyball is the double hit. This is a judgment call by the referee, much as traveling and charging are in basketball. As such, fans may not always agree with a referee or understand why she calls (or does not call) this violation.

The basic rule on a double hit is that a player may not make two separate, consecutive contacts on the ball. The signal for a double hit is to raise the forearm vertically with the index and middle fingers extended.

There are three instances where multiple contacts *do not* constitute a violation:

- A block is not considered to be one of the three team hits, so a player who touches the ball on a block may also make the next play on the ball.
- During blocking, the ball may make multiple contacts with any or all of the players involved in the block, as long as they are made during a single blocking action. This is not a violation, and all of the contacts combined are considered a single block.



This exception is made because blockers have little control over their contacts with the ball, often touching it more than once per block.

- The third exception is the trickiest. During the first team play of a ball coming from the opponents, a player may have multiple contacts on the ball, as long as two conditions are met:
  - 1) the ball must not be played with the fingers
  - 2) the contacts must be part of one action.

What this means is that during a dig the ball can legally hit one arm and then the other, or bounce off a player's arm and then her head.

This rule was added about five years ago, to try to make things a little easier for the defense and thus create longer rallies. Hitting had become so fast and powerful, especially in the men's game, that the floor defense was having trouble keeping up. The change essentially treats digging the same as blocking as far as multiple contacts are concerned (and as long as only one player is involved).

This exception applies not only to a ball coming directly from the opponents, but also to any ball that is played off a teammate's block, since the block is not counted as a team hit.

Also note that the rule does not specify anything about the manner in which the ball was attacked or how hard the ball was hit. The exception applies equally to a defender digging a hard spike and to one playing a dink.

Setting is the main area where officials call double hits. In an ideal set, the ball should come into contact with all of the setter's fingers simultaneously, and then leave them in the same manner. What is especially important is that the timing of the contact be the same for the left and right hands. If one hand contacts the ball before the other does, there will be visible "juggling" of the ball that is an illegal double contact.

Many sets are not quite perfect in this regard, so the job of the referee is to determine what level of imperfection is acceptable. This is often an area of controversy in matches, especially if the coaches think the referee is inconsistent in judging the plays.

## SideOut Club Report

### Members Can Win Courtside Seats!

Seven lucky SideOut Club members have already enjoyed a new membership benefit this year—a chance to win courtside seats for a match.

During each home match, the Club will be giving away two tickets for courtside seats at the next home match. To be eligible, members must come to the merchandise counter and fill out a slip for the drawing (one entry per membership). Entries will be accepted until the beginning of game three, and the winner will be announced by Tim Berkey shortly thereafter.

You can't win unless you register, so be sure to visit the merchandise table at every match!

### NCAA Volleyball News at Matches

Although the merchandise and raffle tables have moved this year, another part of the Club's match-night presence has not. We are still posting the latest NCAA match results, Big Ten standings, national polls, etc. on a poster located directly ahead of you as you come through the turnstiles at Jenison. Look for it at every match, and stay up-to-date on what's happening in Division I volleyball!

### Volunteers Needed

The above heading seems to be a permanent one in this section, but we have had good results on this front recently. This year for the first time, a Board member—Jim Ellis—has assumed the responsibilities

of Volunteer Co-ordinator. He has a volunteer calendar to be filled in for the entire season, and he has been calling and talking to members who have said they might be interested in volunteering.

In particular, we need volunteers to sell at the merchandise counter, and to sell raffle tickets. For the most part, these jobs require that you arrive no later than 45 minutes before match time, and that you work at least until the start of game 3. You'll be able to watch the game from where you work. On-the-job training is provided, and it's really too much fun to think of it as work.

If you can spare some time to help at one or more home matches, please call Jim at (517) 323-3566.

### Board of Directors' Update

With the recent resignation of one Board member, there is now an opening on the SideOut Club Board. Any Club members who are interested in joining the Board should contact Dianna Kaplinski at 394-3557.

The current Board membership is as follows:

Dianna Kaplinski (term expiring '00)	President
Sandy Kilbourn ('98)	Vice-President
Dave Pike ('98)	Treasurer
Laura Willard ('99)	Secretary
Bob Alim-Young ('00)	
Jim Constandt ('99)	
Jim Ellis ('00)	
David Kirkby ('98)	
Dean McCracken ('98)	
Bob Potter ('99)	
J. Michael Smith ('00)	
vacancy ('99)	

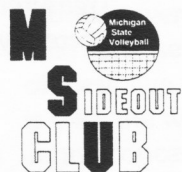
## SideOut Club Calendar

Date	Event	Location	Time
September 26	Coach's Luncheon	Reno's East, 1310 Abbott, East Lansing	11:45 am
October 18	Coach's Luncheon	Reno's East, 1310 Abbott, East Lansing	11:45 am
November 8	Coach's Luncheon	Reno's East, 1310 Abbott, East Lansing	11:45 am
November 28	Coach's Luncheon	Reno's East, 1310 Abbott, East Lansing	11:45 am

## 1997 Schedule and Results

(All home matches are played in Jenison Field House)

8/29	W Duke	8-15, 15-12, 12-15, 15-3, 16-14	10/10	@Purdue	7:30 pm
8/30	W Xavier	15-1, 15-9, 15-4	10/11	@Ohio State	7:30 pm
8/30	L USC	5-15, 15-12, 4-15, 7-15	10/17	IOWA	7:00 pm
9/5	W Drake	15-9, 15-9, 15-11	10/18	MINNESOTA	7:00 pm
9/6	W Duquesne	10-15, 15-6, 15-7, 15-5	10/24	@Indiana	7:30 pm
9/6	W BGSU	15-1, 15-5, 11-15, 15-8	10/25	@Penn State	7:30 pm
9/9	L Russia (exhib.)	6-15, 2-15, 15-7, 15-17	10/31	NORTHWESTERN	7:00 pm
9/12	L South Florida	13-15, 7-15, 12-15	11/2	MICHIGAN (Jam Jenison III)	2:00 pm
9/12	L UCSB	15-12, 12-15, 6-15, 4-15	11/7	OHIO STATE	7:00 pm
9/13	W LMU	15-8, 15-8, 15-11	11/8	PURDUE	7:00 pm
9/13	W Portland St	15-13, 15-10, 13-15, 15-11	11/14	@Illinois	8:00 pm
9/19	W Eastern Illinois	15-6, 15-9, 15-8	11/16	@Wisconsin	TBA
9/20	W Butler	15-10, 15-6, 15-7	11/21	@Minnesota	7:00 pm
9/20	W Kentucky	15-4, 15-9, 15-11)	11/22	@Iowa	7:00 pm
9/26	WISCONSIN	7:00 pm	11/28	PENN STATE	7:00 pm
9/28	ILLINOIS	5:00 pm	11/29	INDIANA	7:00 pm
10/3	@Michigan	7:00 pm	12/5-6	NCAA 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	
10/5	@Northwestern	2:00 pm	12/12-13	NCAA Regionals	
			12/18-20	NCAA Final Four	
				Washington State University	



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