
THE SERVICE LINE

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club

Vol. VI No. 2
October 2000

Big Ten Volleyball Title Up for Grabs

Everyone seems to agree that the Big Ten race is wide open this year. Everyone still has their eyes on Penn State, but, according to Chuck Erbe "For the first time in quite a few years, a Penn State championship is not a given." Minnesota coach Mike Hebert agrees, "Penn State lost their senior nucleus and will not outdistance the rest of the pack like they did last year."

We can expect to see a much more balanced battle for the top, making it highly unlikely that anyone will make it through the conference season undefeated, as Penn State did the last two years. In fact, it wouldn't be too surprising to see the championship go to a team that wins nine conference matches at home and eight on the road. This would be the lowest championship winning percentage in many years, and would make for a very interesting season.

Penn State

Volleyball Magazine rated this year's Penn State recruiting class as eighth best in the nation, and tops

in the Big Ten. In spite of that, it appears that Russ Rose will rely on returning players for what is expected to be another Big Ten championship run. In fact, their starting lineup could very well consist entirely of sophomores and juniors.

They will have a lot to live up to, considering the fact that last year's seniors, including All-Americans Bonnie Bremner and Lauren Cacciamani, never lost a match at home during their four years there.

Opposite hitter Katie Schumacher, outside hitter Amanda Rome, and middle Mishka Levy are the returning starters. Sophomore Shannon Bortner is likely to win the starting setter position, although she will be pressed by freshman Jessica Hayden. Hilary Sexton is expected to be the other outside hitter, but missed the beginning of the season due to recovery from an appendectomy. The other middle spot will be contested by Nadia Edwards and Robyn Guokas.

The Nittany Lions started the season losing to UCLA 2-3 and beating Florida 3-1, in their only pre-conference matches against ranked teams.

Minnesota

Minnesota is a team with high expectations and a lot of pressure this year. 1999 was their best season since 1989, when they made their first of five NCAA tournament appearances. They finished second in the Big Ten in '99, and for the first time won fifteen conference matches, including an impressive seven out of ten on the road. Their performance earned Mike Hebert the Big Ten Coach of the Year award.

The Gophers have five starters returning, including senior big gun Nicole Branagh, who has a very good chance of eclipsing the all-time Big-Ten kill record, currently held by former Gopher Katrien DeDecker. Last year Branagh was a second-team All-American, three-time Big-Ten Player of the Week, and the only Big Ten player to be named national Player of the

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Week. Minnesota also relies heavily on the skills of junior setter Lindsey Berg, who led the conference in aces last year.

However, Hebert is unsure of the depth of his team, and is looking for improvement in two areas. "We must continue to cut down on our unforced errors, primarily hitting errors," said Hebert. "Second, we have to dig a higher percentage of balls."

The Gophers offered a demonstration of their confidence in a 3-0 sweep of #11 Pacific, the only ranked opponent in their pre-season schedule.

Wisconsin

The 1999 Wisconsin Badgers finished a respectable third in the conference, but seemed as though they were struggling all season. Part of this may have been adjusting to new coach Pete Waite after the unexpected departure of John Cook. A bigger factor may have been the see-saw battle for the starting setter position between Lizzy Fitzgerald and Morgan Shields. Now that junior Fitzgerald appears to have locked down the spot, the team hopes to solidify behind her.

Senior Jenny Maastricht is their top hitter and a second-team All-American last year. Middle blocker Sherisa Livingston is being given serious consideration by the U.S. national program. She played on the Junior National Team in 1998 and 1999, and this past summer traveled with the

national team to a tournament in Switzerland, although she did not play. She ranked twelfth in the country last year in blocking.

Badger opponents could have a surprise in the form of red-shirt freshman Claudia Rodriguez, a former member of the Mexico junior national team. She is 6' 3" and can play either outside hitter or the middle. Also watch for their senior and freshman defensive specialists, sisters Jamie and Korie Gardner.

Wisconsin lost 0-3 to Florida, in their only pre-conference match against a ranked team.

Jenison Scheduled for Remodeling

Two years from now, if everything goes as planned, the Spartan volleyball team will be enjoying a major upgrade of their facilities. The changes won't be very apparent to fans, but will make a big difference to the team, according to coach Chuck Erbe.

"This is an old building and it's being used by more different sports, with more athletes than it can handle", he explained. "The teams are forced to share locker rooms, which shouldn't be happening at an institution of MSU's caliber. Too many things that we do are awkward because of the cramped quarters."

For example, the women's gymnastics team practices in the third floor gym, and uses the third floor bathroom as a locker room, because it's easier than going out of the way to fit in the general locker room downstairs.

Jenison Field House was built in 1940 and hasn't had a major upgrade since then. The seven-million-dollar project will be funded through a bond package and paid for from future revenues of the Athletic Department.

The emphasis of the renovation is on the locker rooms and training facilities, with no changes included for the playing arena. The entire ground floor of the main building will be gutted and rebuilt to create brand new separate locker rooms for each of the twelve teams that use the building, including volleyball, softball, track and field, crew, and others. There will be a 4,000 square foot training room and the weight room will double in size. The building will

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Published five times per year, in March, August, October, November and December

Newsletter Editor:	Chris Wolf	(517) 332-4353
President:	Jenny Bond	(517) 676-2676
Vice-president:	Dave Martz	(517) 521-4907
Secretary:	Ron Springer	(517) 351-3008
Treasurer:	Jim Ellis	(517) 323-3566

MSU SideOut Club, P.O. Box 80491, Lansing MI 48908
Email: jimandeileenellis@prodigy.net
Web site: www.msusideout.org

have its own laundry for the first time; currently everything has to be carted to another building to be cleaned.

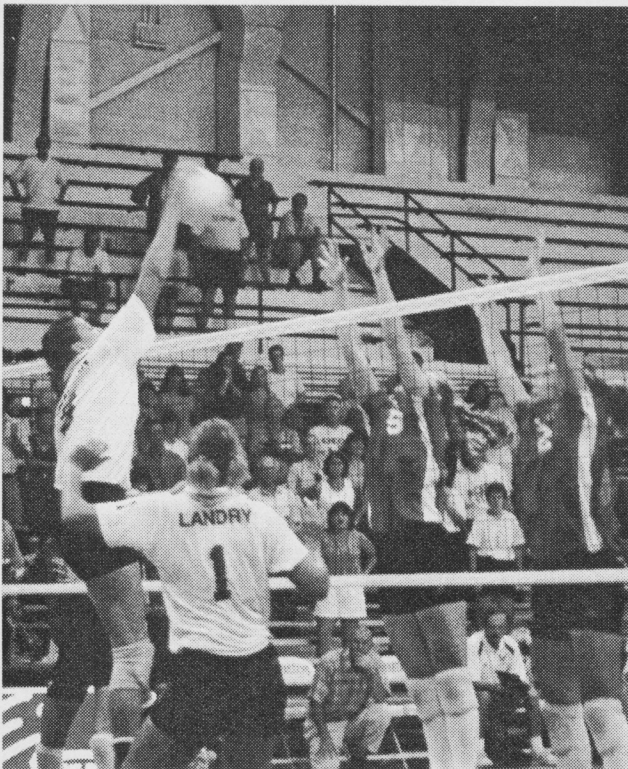
The improvements will not only make life better for our team, they will also help in recruiting. "In recruiting, so much is presentation", says Chuck. "Having all the right elements, including modern facilities, is critical for a good first impression."

The planners looked at all sorts of options for the upgrade. There would have been many advantages to expanding the building with an addition, but there were too many restrictions caused by the Red Cedar River flood plain.

The work will begin in May of 2001, to be completed in August of 2002. It may be impossible to avoid conflicts with the volleyball season, so some of our home matches for 2001 may have to be played in the Breslin Center.

Sanborn Off to a Great Start

Spartan co-captain Jessica Sanborn's senior year has started off with a bang.



Jessica Sanborn pounds down another kill. Photo: Chris Wolf

Her performance in the L&L Tournament during the opening weekend earned her Most Valuable Player honors, with a .600 hitting percentage and 27 kills. This was especially noteworthy since she sat out one of the three matches so that other players could get playing time. In the match against Eastern Washington, she combined a tournament-high hitting percentage of .640 with a tournament-high 8 blocks. In that match she executed more attacks than any other Spartan, which is very unusual for a middle hitter, and had more kills than the next two Spartans combined.

At Notre Dame, she again sat out one of MSU's three matches, but was again named to the all-tournament team. In the match against Notre Dame, she was the match leader with 26 kills and 8 blocks. That represented a new career high in kills for her, as did her 16 digs in the same match. To top it off, she also had MSU's highest hitting percentage at .452.

So, for the first two weekends, she leads the team in hitting percentage at .450, as is expected of a middle hitter. More remarkable is the fact that she also leads in kills per game with 4.33, and is second in digs per game with 2.8.

New Report on ACL Injuries

Sports medicine researchers claim to be making advances in reducing anterior-cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries to female athletes. In June, Dr. Timothy E. Hewett presented a report at the meeting of the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine on a video analysis method and training program to identify and help those most at risk.

Three Spartan volleyball players—Julie Pavlus, Courtney DeBolt, and Christie Landry—have torn their ACLs since 1994. Some estimates indicate that in such sports as volleyball and basketball, 1 in 10 female athletes will suffer an ACL tear.

Studies show that female athletes are at greater risk for knee damage if their knees tend to turn in too far when they land from a jump. Hewett's group, from the Cincinnati Sportsmedicine Research & Education Foundation, uses video analysis to identify women whose knees have excessive movement.

Their study went on to show that a properly designed six-week training program could reduce such knee movements in female athletes. Before training, women's knees on average moved five centimeters inwards per knee when jumping from a foot-high box, whereas men's knees moved only three centimeters per knee. After the 3-day-per-week, 90-minute-per-day training program that included single-leg balances, jumps and stretching, the women's knees moved only as much as men's.

More information on their work can be found at www.sportsmetrics.net.

SideOut Club Bus Trip to Illinois

The SideOut Club will offer a bus trip to the University of Illinois in Champaign on the second weekend of the 2000 Big Ten season. The trip will cost \$50, including the cost of a ticket for the match.

Departure is Saturday September 30th at 11 am from the Okemos Road and I-96 Park-and-Ride lot. The bus will return to East Lansing immediately following the match.

You can sign up for the trip by contacting Julie Carmichael at 676-5211 or at the SideOut Club counter at the Michigan match, September 20.

SideOut Club Coach's Luncheons

Be sure to make your Spartan volleyball experience complete by coming to the SideOut Club Coach's Luncheons this year. Coach Erbe is known for his frank and candid commentary about our team, the Big Ten competition, and volleyball in general.

The first luncheon will correspond with the opening of the Big Ten season, Wednesday September 20 when we host Michigan. Other luncheons will be held on our five Big Ten home Saturdays. The dates are October 7 and 21, and November 4, 11 and 25.

The gatherings will take place at Buddies Pub & Grill in East Lansing at 11:30 am. This is located in the Carriage Hills Shopping Center, at the corner of Hagadorn and Lake Lansing Roads. The cost will be \$7.50 to cover food and drink.

MSU Volleyball on the Airwaves

Local Cable

AT&T Cable will televise eight MSU home volleyball matches this season on channel 17 in Lansing and channel 13 in East Lansing/Meridian Township. Broadcasts will begin with the Michigan match on September 20 and continue through the Ohio State match on November 11.

Each match will be televised live, and then will be replayed several times during the following week. The first announced replay is of the September 20 match, on September 22 at 7:00 pm.

Radio

WVFN AM 730 has announced they will produce live broadcasts of five Spartan away matches and three home matches. The schedule is as follows:

Date	Opponent	Time
9/20	MICHIGAN	7:00
9/22	@Ohio State	7:00
9/29	@Purdue	8:00
10/13	@Wisconsin	8:00
10/14	@Northwestern	8:00
11/3	ILLINOIS	7:00
11/8	@Michigan	7:00
11/11	OHIO STATE	8:00

The radio feed can also be heard live on the Internet at www.msuspartans.com.

ESPN2

Three Big Ten matches—none involving MSU—will be televised on a delayed basis by ESPN2. The first will be Indiana at Ohio State on October 21, which will be aired on October 22 at 3:30 pm.

The biggest match will most likely be Penn State at Minnesota on November 4, to be shown November 7 at 1:00 pm. The final broadcast will be Purdue at Wisconsin on November 18, aired November 19 at 2:30 pm.

Fox Sports Chicago

Eight Big Ten matches, including MSU at Illinois, will be carried on Fox Sports Chicago. The MSU/Illinois match, to be played September 30, will be shown October 2 at 8 pm.

Summary of Rules Changes

Rules for Division 1 women's volleyball have only minor changes for 2000.

*The number of allowable substitutions per game has been increased from 15 to 18. This was an experimental rule last year.

*The ball is no longer required to be white, so we may see the use of multi-colored balls.

*The definition of a block has been made a little more strict, so that a player is now considered a blocker only if some part of her body is above the net at the time of contact. Previously, there was an instance where a player touching the ball while below the top of the net could be considered a blocker.

There is also an experimental rule which says that a served ball that hits the net and continues to the opponent's side remains in play. This rule will be used in a match only if both coaches agree to it prior to the match.

The "net serve" rule has been used in international play for about a year, and will be used in the Olympics for both indoor and outdoor volleyball. Our team played under this rule for the matches during the trip to Europe. Chuck says "I think it's a great rule, because of the way it keeps play going. Our players adjusted to it in one game."

Olympic Volleyball on TV

The Sydney Olympics run from September 16 through October 1, and indoor volleyball may be the only sport that is played every day of the games. This year NBC claims it will offer "the most extensive coverage of Olympic volleyball and beach volleyball in U.S. television history."

The good news is that they will concentrate on "long-form coverage" to "satisfy the really fervent

sports fan", apparently planning to show matches in their entirety when possible. The bad news is that very little of the coverage will be in prime time.

Most of the indoor volleyball coverage will be televised on NBC during the late-night segment, running from approximately 12:40 to 2:10 am each day. Most of the beach volleyball will be on MSNBC between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm.

For detailed schedules, go to www.nbcolympics.com.

Some Matches to Start Later

Almost half of the Spartans' Big Ten home matches will have a later starting time than usual. The 8:00 pm start will be used for the Penn State match on October 6, Minnesota on October 20, Iowa on October 21, and Ohio State on November 11.

SideOut Club Report

Board of Directors

At the August membership meeting, two current directors were re-elected, along with three new directors. There was a twist this year, however, because two of the "new" directors have served prior terms on the Board. The new Board is as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Jenny Bond (term expiring '01) | President |
| Dave Martz ('01) | Vice-President |
| Jim Ellis ('03) | Treasurer |
| Ron Springer ('01) | Secretary |
| Julie Carmichael ('02) | |
| Jim Constandt ('02) | |
| Dennis Eagle ('01) | |
| Kathy Lovell ('02) | |
| Dave Pike ('03) | |
| Bob Potter ('03) | |
| Diana Priebe ('02) | |
| Kay Schmid ('03) | |

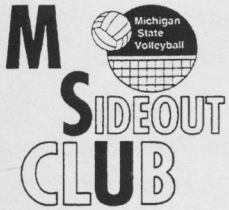
Volunteers Needed

As always, we need lots of volunteers to sell merchandise and raffle tickets during home matches. If you can spare some time to help out (and have some fun to boot) at one or more home matches, please call Jim Ellis at (517) 323-3566.

2000 Schedule

(All home matches are played in Jenison Field House. All times listed are Eastern.)

9/1	W	RUTGERS	15-11, 15-7, 15-11				
9/2	W	NORTHEASTERN	15-2, 15-3, 15-7				
9/2	W	EASTERN WASHINGTON	15-5, 15-5, 15-10				
9/8	L	UCLA	15-13, 12-15, 11-15, 7-15				
9/9	L	Nebraska	3-15, 3-15, 4-15				
9/10	W	Notre Dame	12-15, 15-7, 15-12, 12-15, 15-10				
9/15		Hofstra					
9/16		Georgetown					
9/16		San Diego					
9/20		MICHIGAN		7:00 pm			
9/22		@Ohio State		7:00 pm			
9/29		@Purdue		8:00 pm			
9/30		@Illinois		8:00 pm			
10/6		PENN STATE		8:00 pm			
10/7		INDIANA		7:00 pm			
10/13		@Wisconsin				8:00 pm	
10/14		@Northwestern				8:00 pm	
10/20		MINNESOTA				8:00 pm	
10/21		IOWA				8:00 pm	
10/27		@Indiana				8:00 pm	
10/28		@Penn State				7:00 pm	
11/3		ILLINOIS				7:00 pm	
11/4		PURDUE				7:00 pm	
11/8		@Michigan				7:00 pm	
11/11		OHIO STATE				8:00 pm	
11/17		@Iowa				8:00 pm	
11/18		@Minnesota				8:00 pm	
11/24		NORTHWESTERN				7:00 pm	
11/25		WISCONSIN				7:00 pm	
12/2-3		NCAA - 1st and 2nd Round					
12/9-10		NCAA Regionals					
12/14-16		NCAA Championships in Richmond, Virginia					



P.O. Box 80491
Lansing MI 48908