

have no idea how much this meant to all of us. Although I say THANK YOU WITH ALL OF MY HEART, it just doesn't do justice to the deeply felt feelings we have. Going through all the trouble you did so we could have volleyball equipment is just amazing. You have truly inspired my team and myself. We feel like we are "teammates in heart and spirit." My girls wish they could meet you and your team but I told them that we can certainly keep in touch and write back and forth. The love and care you extended to us is remarkable, and one that none of us will EVER forget. Your team's picture still hangs in our locker room, and in my office, and will remain there for all time. Even though volleyball season is over, we never let a day go by without remembering you, your team and your unbelievable thoughtfulness. We have spread the word of your generosity to all we see to let others know how wonderful you all are, and how much we appreciate all you have done for us. Our thanks is so immensely heartfelt and huge, and I only hope you REALLY KNOW HOW VERY MUCH WE APPRECIATE YOU!!!

Please, please keep in touch and extend our huge thank you and happy New Year to you, your team, and your family.

Thankfully blessed,
Kelli Plascia
Chalmette, La

Commentary

Minnesota once again made the top 5 in the country (#4) in match attendance, that despite virtually no coverage by the local media. Actually, MVN pointed out that a basketball player's stubbed toe during pre-season workouts received more coverage than a major match by the volleyball team on that same day. Coverage was actually so meager in 2006 that 'minor' coverage would be a great exaggeration.

*We hope you enjoy reading **Minnesota Volleyball News** and welcome any news that you think is appropriate for the next or future issues. If you have any news you would like to tout in this irregularly published newsletter, please forward it to us. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please send an email to MinnesotaVolleyballNews@comcast.net and state your preference.*

Eleena Iisakka, Esko HS, Minnesota Duluth
Blair Murphy, Hermantown, Concordia-St. Paul
Alyssa Nelson, Hayfield HS, Minnesota Duluth
Allie Oelke, Chaska, Creighton
Emilie Palkert, Southwest Christian, Concordia-St. Paul
Krystal Schwanke, Springfield, Southwest Minnesota State
Leigh Splittstoesser, Stewartville, MSU-Moorhead
Laura Tvrdik, Minnewaska, MSU Moorhead
Kasey Uran, Sartell, Southwest Minnesota State
Lauren Wagner, Cretin-Derham Hall, Fairfield-Connecticut
Jennifer Waterman, Andover, St. Cloud State
Kasey Woodcock, Delano, Concordia-St. Paul
Sarah Schwanz, Eagan, Armstrong Atlantic State in Georgia

Coaches: Please email news/signings from your teams to
MinnesotaVolleyballNews@comcast.net.

Club

The Minneapolis Convention Center will be the host site of the 2007 USA Junior Olympic Girls Volleyball Championship

Other News

Here is a follow-up on the **Minneapolis South HS** volleyball team adopting a volleyball team from a New Orleans parish that suffered greater than 99% destruction from Hurricane Katrina. The coach of the New Orleans team, despite what sounds like continued almost overwhelming adversity, took time to respond to the generous actions of the South team.

Coach McBride,

Happy New Year!!! Hope all is well with you and your family and that the New Year holds all things wonderful for you. Things here are progressing-which is wonderful. If someone were to visit who did not know our town before the hurricane would probably not see the progression. Lots of homes, businesses, etc are still left as is of the hurricane, some are gutted and the shell of the home (if any) is standing, and some are back and rebuilding (like myself) and some have actually moved into their new houses! But, if you live here, you can see the progress, even if it's a little, to keep inspiring us to come home and rebuild. Like they say, "there's no place like home." As for me personally and my family, we had too much damage to our original house, so we bought a gutted house in another subdivision (right across the highway from our old house) because it only had 7 feet of water. (our house had 13!). My husband has become a true "learn by trying" handyman in fixing up the new house. Because we have 2 little ones (Brock 7 and Brynn 3), we were able to fix the house enough for Christmas time to spend the night so Santa could come. Although staying in a FEMA trailer was a good alternative to living somewhere else, being able to be in a house again in unexplainable! It's very exciting and being able to walk around without having to move aside for someone to pass is awesome!

In thinking and celebrating the new year, the team and myself completely celebrated and honored you and your team in the past year. You really have no idea how much your generosity and kindness affected us. My team was overly touched by all the help and thoughtfulness. You and your team were declared our HEROES! We all couldn't believe that you found your way to our little town and our school! You really

2006 State Tournament Results

AAA

1. Chaska
2. Lakeville North
3. Blaine
4. Eagan
5. Marshall
6. Wayzata
7. Moorhead
7. Hibbing

AA

1. Jordan
2. Stewartville
3. Pipestone/Jasper
4. LeSueur-Henderson
5. St. Cloud Cathedral
6. Lake of the Woods
7. Montevideo
7. Virginia

A

1. Minneota
2. Faribault Bethlehem Academy
3. Central Minnesota Christian
4. Climax/Fisher
5. Meadow Creek Christian
6. Wheaton
7. Littlefork-Big Falls
7. Bertha-Hewitt

Brook Dieter, Bloomington Kennedy HS outside hitter and a Golden Gopher recruit was named to the 2006 AVCA High School Senior All-America team. She was rated the #5 Senior Ace by PrepVolleyball.com.

Lauren Gibbemeyer, Cretin-Derham Hall middle blocker was rated the #4 Senior Ace by PrepVolleyball.com. Lauren will also be a Golden Gopher this fall.

Halley Cowles, Eden Prairie, outside hitter, was named Minnesota Ms. Volleyball. She also is a Gopher recruit.

Area Signings (some, but not all).

Annie Adams, Crosby-Ironton, South Dakota State

Lauren Baufield, Wayzata, East Tennessee State

Amanda Beekman, Marshall, MSU-Mankato

Leah Bjerke, Rochester, Southwest Minnesota State

Christa Erickson, Andover, Concordia-St. Paul

Amy Gatz, Winstead, St. Cloud State

Laura Greenwood, Duluth East, MSU Moorhead

April Hansen, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa HS, Minnesota Duluth

Melissa Henderson, Osseo, MSU-Moorhead

Naomi Johnson, Bloomington Kennedy, Northwestern

Rachel Knutsen, St. Michael-Albertville, Concordia-St. Paul

The 2006 Concordia volleyball team continued to receive high national honors as three players were selected as first team all-Americans by NCAA Division II sports information directors from around the nation. Two seniors, **Jessica Lucia** and **Kelsey Kyro**, along with just the third freshman first team all-American in the history of the program, **Maggie McNamara**, were the three Golden Bears selected. (Editor's note, who is also a coach who is tired of hearing players say they are "Too short to play middle or hit outside", Jessica Lucia is 5'9" and Kelsie Kyro is 5'8")

Vicky Braegelmann University of Minneosta Duluth 2nd Team
Erin Contons Southwest Minnesota State 2nd Team

University/College Division III

Final CSTV/USA Today Poll. November 21, 2006

Concordia (Minn.) #7
St. Thomas (Minn.) #11

NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) Division III

Central Lakes Community College-Brainerd finished the 2006 season by winning the consolation match (for 3rd place) at the national championships in Rochester, MN on November 18, 2006.

Coaching Changes University/College

David Boos, former associate head coach for the **University of Minnesota** has been named head coach of Ball State.

Scott Swanson has been promoted to associate head coach at the **University of Minnesota**

Dave Manka has been promoted to assistant coach at the **University of Minnesota**.

Kim Falkenhagen, former head coach of **Bemidji State University** has been named head coach of **Eastern New Mexico State University**

Heather Roberts, former graduate assistant at **Bemidji State University** has been named assistant coach at **University of Missouri-Rolla**

Laurie Bitter of Lake of the Woods HS has been named new head coach at **Bemidji State University**.

Jamie Skadeland, former assistant coach at **MSU-Mankato** has been named assistant coach at **Colorado School of Mines & Technology**

Aaron Nelson has been appointed assistant volleyball coach at St. Cloud State University

Beach News

There is an **Adult General Skills Sand/Beach Clinic March 24-25** at the Apple Valley Community Center (indoors). Coaches are AVP professionals Jen Bowman, Steph Chapek (Hagen), & Kevin Nelson. Call (651) 687-9835. Time is short.

High School



Jim Polster

University/College Division I

The **University of Minnesota** finished their season with a final national ranking of #6 after losing to eventual national champion Nebraska in five games, one of the few teams to really test the Huskers this season. The Gophers made the Elite Eight and were up 2-0 against Nebraska, but couldn't pull the magical 3rd win out of their hats to make it to another Final Four. It was another remarkable run and equally remarkable final match for the Gophers who were ranked #20 in the *Volleyball Magazine* preseason poll. Middle hitter **Meredith Nelson** was voted AVCA 2nd Team and ASICS'/Volleyball 2nd team All-American and All-Big Ten. **Malama Peniata** was an AVCA honorable mention and Big Ten defensive player of the year. **Kelly Bowman** was named ASICS'/Volleyball All-American Honorable Mention and All-Big Ten. Minnesota is now considered to have the best locker room of any collegiate program after its recent \$100,000 renovation.

PrepVolleyball.com reported that **Alex Blatt**, a 5'11" setter from Sandburg High School (Orland Park, IL) and 1st Alliance VBC, has orally committed to the **Gophers** for 2008. According to *PrepVolleyball.com*, "Junior Alex Blatt was a virtual unknown when she laced them up for [her high school] coach Kelly Mendoza. Now, the setter/hitter is an athletic, explosive talent college coaches are salivating over."

Special congratulations to **Dr. Mike Hebert**, coach of the Golden Gophers for his induction into the 2006 AVCA Volleyball Hall of Fame. Dr. Hebert has 5 times been voted Big 10 Coach of the Year and has once been named AVCA National Coach of the Year. He has four times led teams to the NCAA Final Four. Dr. Hebert was also named the Mideast Region Coach of the Year. He also was featured in a two page pictorial/Q&A article in the February *Volleyball Magazine*.

University/College Division II

Final CSTV/USA Today Poll, November 20, 2006

University of Minnesota Duluth #2
Concordia University (St. Paul) #4
Southwest Minnesota State #25

Minnesota Volleyball News (MVN) 3/07

—an eclectic news roundup of the #1 Women’s sport in
Minnesota, the USA, & the World—

National/International

Kelly Bowman, 2006 setter/DS and former 1st Team All-American for Minnesota has been named to the US Women’s National Training Team. **Rachel Hartmann, Kyla Roehrig, Jessie Jones, Kattie Vatterodt** of the Golden Gophers were named to the tryout team

Elizabeth (Wiz) Bachman of Lakeville, All-American at UCLA, and Women’s National Team middle blocker since 2001 was married

December 9th to Hugh McCutcheon, head coach of the Men’s National Team. She left the National Team recently, but it didn’t take long before former National Team coach Toshi Yoshida called and asked her to fly out in January to Japan to play for three months on the team he coaches, the Pioneer Redwings. She was having a great time playing for her former National Team coach until...let’s have her explain it.. “The good news was that I blocked the ball, the bad news was that I broke my finger in two places right through the joint. I currently have it in a cast and I am hoping to be back for the last two weeks of regular season and for the playoffs” according to Bachman.



Wiz Bachman



Cassie Busse

The **US Women** with former Golden Gopher **Cassie Busse** on the roster finished 9th at the World Championships November 20th 2006.

The **US Men** with former Minnesotan **Jim Polster** in the starting lineup finished 10th at the World Championships December 8, 2006.