

Coaching Management

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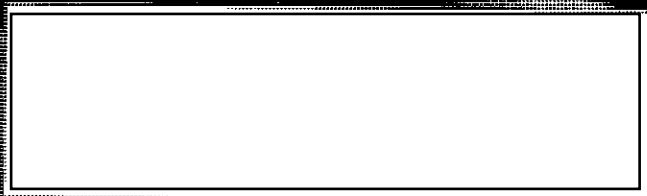
VOLLEYBALL PRESEASON EDITION 2005

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SECOND-STRING STARS

Getting the most
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To help fund the libero position, the NCAA is considering allowing Division I teams one additional scholarship beginning in 2006. Kansas State libero Angie Lastra is shown above.

beginning in the 2006-07 academic year.

The impetus behind the proposal was the NCAA's introduction of the libero in 2002. With an additional position on team rosters, the Committee on Women's Athletics recommended the increase. It was also noted in the rationale for the proposal that the number of volleyball athletes receiving grants-in-aid is at the maximum at most NCAA Division I schools. Therefore, an additional scholarship would not benefit only the wealthiest athletic departments.

Suzie Fritz, Head Coach at Kansas State University, supports the proposal because she believes it's a win-win proposition for both Division I programs and their athletes. "I

strongly believe that having the ability to financially reward another student-athlete is in our best interest," she says. "It would allow us to build more depth and more balance on our teams. The libero was an immensely important addition, and we are currently putting scholarship dollars into that position. With a 13th scholarship, those dollars won't be taken away from another attacker or setter that we might want to recruit.

"From the perspective of wanting to provide as many opportunities as we can for young women to earn athletic and academic scholarships, I think it's a wonderful thing," Fritz adds. "The more opportunities that we can provide for young women to go on and play sports and get their education, the better."

Opposition to the proposal has come mainly from Divisions II and III and junior colleges, where there is concern that the additional scholarship will lure quality players away from their programs. But according to Fritz, the decision of which environment provides the best fit for an individual still lies with the student-athlete herself.

"Someone who is a 13th-scholarship type of player may realize that she could choose a Division I program but perhaps never play at that institution, and therefore

decide to accept a scholarship from a Division II program where she will be a starter," Fritz explains. "The choice will still belong to the athlete, but this would provide more opportunities for female student-athletes and that's a real positive."

A 60-day comment period on the proposal, No. 2004-21, was recently completed and a second vote will be taken at Management Council meetings in April. If it passes, the proposal will be forwarded to the NCAA Board of Directors for final approval.

RIT Practices Foreign Relations

Thinking of going on a team trip? Taking your players out of their comfort zone can prove to be a beneficial and worthwhile endeavor, says Roger Worsley, Head Coach at the Rochester Institute of Technology, who traveled with his squad to Tianjin, China last August to play against the Tianjin University of Technology.

The trek provided both a cultural adventure and a unique preseason training opportunity. "It was an incredible experience," Worsley says. "It allowed the team to bond and gave the players an opportunity to see things in a completely different perspective."

Before they left, Worsley told his team to remember it was still preseason, and that they needed to concentrate on the training aspect of the trip. And train they did, every morning with the TUT team in their host's gym.

"Training with them made a big difference," says Worsley. "Immediately, there was a connection there. One thing I found was that while there were language and cultural barriers, volleyball is still volleyball."

RIT played two games against TUT and one against the Tianjin Professional Sports School, losing all three, but Worsley and Assistant Coach Kathleen Schreier were happy with their team's effort. The coaches took solace in the fact that TUT is the three-time defending national university champion and TPSS is a year-round sports school training future Olympians.

In preparation for their trip, Worsley had a group of Chinese students at RIT, including several from Tianjin, speak with the team about their homeland and what to expect overseas. Worsley says the key to the successful trip was that his players went with open minds in terms of trying new foods, learning a little of the language, and seeing everything they could.

"We all agreed and understood that you just need to go into this with an open mind," Worsley says. "And whatever the experience gave



RIT players shake hands with athletes from the Tianjin University of Technology, who they competed against both in China and on their own campus this past fall.

Further information on the proposal can be found on the NCAA website at www.ncaa.org. For more information, contact the NCAA at 601 North College Avenue, Suite 200, Champaign, IL 61820-1121. For more information, contact the NCAA at 601 North College Avenue, Suite 200, Champaign, IL 61820-1121.

us, we took from it 100 percent and I think that makes for a great trip."

The team had some free time in the afternoons, which they spent shopping, exploring Tiananmen Square, and sight-seeing with their host team. "The street markets in China were so much fun," says Sarah Ballard, a senior on the team. "We all tried bargaining, and we got to meet a lot of characters in the marketplace."

In October, it was RIT's turn to play host to the Tianjin volleyball team, which visited the RIT campus and traveled across the state to play Syracuse University and Nazareth College. "It was really exciting to have them visit us," Schreier says. "Even though we were only over there for a short time, some strong bonds were formed. It was great to be able to see them again and return the hospitality they showed us."

The opportunity came about through the school's affiliation with an organization called PEN-International, a worldwide system of colleges and universities educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Both RIT and TUT have Technical Institutes for the Deaf on their campuses, and TUT was interested in expanding its relationship with RIT beyond the academic connection. In May of last year, TUT sent a group of martial artists to RIT for a workshop in exchange for hosting the volleyball team.

Despite an NCAA rule that allows only one international trip every four years, Worsley is looking forward to continuing the bond the universities have formed. "The relationship is there," Worsley says. "We would definitely look at making a return trip when the time is right."

Peer Education Reduces Risks

When adolescents want information or advice, where do they turn? Although adults might wish for a different answer, it's usually to their peers. A new program for teenage female student-athletes uses that fact to its advantage, and according to a recent study, it's seeing great results.

A study published in the November issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* showed that a group of high school athletes who took part in a program called ATHENA (Athletes Targeting Healthy Exercise and Nutrition Alternatives) as part of their sport season were significantly less likely to participate in unhealthy behaviors. They were less likely to start using diet pills, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, or muscle-building supplements; drive with someone who had been drinking; become sexually active; use tobacco; or vomit to lose weight. And they were more likely to engage in

healthy eating and strength training. They also proved less prone to injury during their season.

The study was conducted by ATHENA's developers, a team of researchers at Oregon Health & Science University, on 928 athletes from 40

Rather than preaching or using scare tactics, the program uses improved athletic performance as motivation for encouraging healthy choices.

teams at 18 Washington and Oregon high schools. Before starting the program, student-athletes filled out anonymous questionnaires to assess their attitudes and behaviors. After completing the program, they took the questionnaires again—with very different results.

To develop ATHENA, the researchers started with the framework for ATLAS, a similar curriculum that has been successful in reducing anabolic steroid use among male student-athletes. However,

ATHENA targets issues specifically affecting adolescent girls, such as eating disorders, diet pill use, body dissatisfaction, drug use, depression, and the media's portrayal of women. Rather than preaching or using scare tactics, the program focuses on providing accurate information and uses

improved athletic performance as motivation for encouraging healthy choices.

"When it comes to nutrition, nowhere in the program does it say, 'Don't take diet pills and don't make yourself vomit,'" says Diane Elliot, a researcher with the Division of Health Promotion and Sports Medicine at Oregon Health & Science and one of the program's creators. "Instead, we put it in performance terms: How much protein and carbohydrate do you need to fuel your engine for practice?"

To help girls deconstruct media portrayals of women, student-athletes are asked to look at specific print and television advertisements and discuss whether the women they portray have healthy, realistic body shapes and sizes. Then they are asked to re-make the ads in a way that reflects a healthy lifestyle.

To address the increased risk of depression faced by females, athletes learn a technique called "cognitive restructuring" which teaches them to make connections between their thoughts and their moods by keeping logs. "Once they make connections between their thoughts, emotions, and activities, they can avoid getting caught in a spi-

