

Point Loma Athletics

RECRUITING CLASS

By Karol Jennings and Jorge de la Torre

VOLLEYBALL

With the addition of eight new players and a new head coach to the PLNU volleyball team, time is of the essence. Aurora Salas, hired to replace retiring Barb Wnek, has served notice that a “rebuilding year” at the bottom of the GSAC is not on the agenda.

Joining the returning players are two transfers and one of the largest crop of freshman ever to hit Golden Gymnasium.

Volleyball is sophomore Kate Alderson’s third Sea Lion sport. The transfer from Division One school Boise State



Head Volleyball Coach Aurora Salas with her team at practice.



participated in both basketball and track and field. She was honored at Park Hill South High School and was named to All-League, All-District, and All-State teams twice.

Junior-college transfer Shannon Milicic made an immediate impact with the Taft Community College Cougars. Milicic was chosen as the Central Valley MVP and was named to the All-Northern California, All-State and All-American teams.

During her last season on her high school team in Prescott, Ariz. Natalie Acklin earned recognition as an All-Area Player of the Year and the Wells Fargo Region Player of the Year while making the All-State team.

Coming in at the setter position is Connie Irwin, a team MVP from Prairie High School in Brush Prairie, Wash. After making First Team All-League, Irwin, a member of the Nike Air Elite club team, went on to join the All-State team.

Defensive specialist Jill Konderik gained experience at Horizon High School in Scottsdale, Ariz, and on her club team, the East Valley Juniors, was recognized as an All-Region player.

Katie Stauffer, an outside hitter from Village Christian High School in Sun Valley, Calif., had a dream senior season, especially in tournament play. Her All-Tournament performances included the Poly Technic Invitational and the

Laguna Blanca Tournament. At the end of the year, Stauffer racked up her third First Team All-League title.

Middle blocker Megan Walls was the team MVP her junior and senior season at Thunderbird High School in Phoenix, as well as a member of the All-Region teams. In her senior year, Walls made the Arizona Northwest Regional team and the Second-Team All-State.

Amy Worgull dominated in the Diablo Foothill Athletic League where she was named to the First-Team All-League. She was team leader and MVP at Dublin (Ca.) High School.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Last season, only one GSAC loss kept PLNU women’s soccer from making a post-season appearance. To maintain the climb up the standings, Head Coach Mark Halpert has brought in three scoring threats in freshmen Christine Grover, Stephanie Cates and Erin Mahoney.

Grover, a standout athlete at Maranatha High School, also played at the highest club level since age 10, primarily as a midfielder/forward. For three years, she competed for a Claremont Stars team that tied for first in the division and was ranked second in the state. Last season she played for the Alta Loma Arsenal.

Cates comes from San Dimas High School, where as team captain she led the Saints to a Valley Vista League title in her junior year and was runner-up League MVP. Named her team’s best offensive player she also garnered first-team All-Valley and third-team All-CIF status.

Leading Palm Springs High School to a first-place finish in 2003, Erin Mahoney was named All-CIF and Desert Valley Player of the Year and extended her trend as a first-team all-league and team MVP to three consecutive seasons. Mahoney has also seen playing time in the Desert United Soccer Club and competed outside the United States in the PFA National Women’s Soccer Festival (England) in 2002 and in a tour of Sweden in 2001.

Midfielder Stephanie Rasette began her collegiate career at Division I school Texas Christian University. The following year, Rasette left transferred to Mesa College in San Diego, one of the nation’s top ranked junior colleges. Rasette’s high school experience was at Centennial High School where she was selected four-times as all-league, three times all-area, captain and MVP, and was the three-time team leading scorer. She was also MVP of the Celtic Cup and Atascadero Tournaments.

Freshman Marcella Flores chose PLNU after an exciting senior season in which she helped lead her team to the CIF Division II Championship. Known as a skills player with great offensive talent, Flores was twice named as All-League in the Pacific Coast League.

Among the most versatile of the recruits is Irvine (Calif.) High’s Becky Torres. Originally deemed a defensive player, Torres was responsible for many Vaquero victories by stepping into offensive mode. Torres was also a member of the elite Irvine Striker’s club team.





Coach Halpert found Lacey Troth at Quartz Hill High School, in Lancaster, Calif. Her most outstanding performances helped earn her recognition as part of the All-CIF Division II First Team.

The Sea Lions will also welcome Kristin Chung from Hawaii. A forward/midfielder, Chung honed her talents with state Olympic Development teams. With primed leadership skills, Chung led the Pac-5 to important wins over Interscholastic League of Honolulu opponents.

MEN'S SOCCER

The Sea Lions team returns most of its core players as far as offensive threats are concerned. That hasn't stopped Coach Tim Hall from bringing in freshmen Brian Thames, a highly recruited forward out of Dobson High School in Mesa, Ariz. Thames, brother of current Sea Lion Derrick Thames, scored an amazing 38 goals for the Mustangs his senior season with 26 assists. A team MVP, Brian was also the Region Player of the Year, a first-team All-State Player and defender for the Saharous Soccer Club.

The departure of star Sea Lion defenders has left a void that incoming freshman Chad Vargo hopes to fill. Vargo, from Escondido (Ca.) High School, garnered first-team all-league over the last two seasons, and the San Diego *Union-Tribune* All-North County and Valley League Player of the Year status. His impressive resume also includes stints on the Olympic Development Program Regional Team, three years in the National Pool and the Nomad Soccer Club.

PLNU SEVENTH IN NACDA DIRECTOR'S CUP

Point Loma took seventh place in the 2003-04 United States Sports Academy Directors' Cup, shy mere three points from placing in the top five.

The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics awards a cup to the top school in each of the NCAA Divisions (I, II, and III), and the NAIA based on a scoring system. PLNU's athletic program finished with 542.75 points this year; last year it reached an all-time best sixth place with 566 points.

Point Loma's final score was boosted by five teams that finished 2003-2004 with a top-10 placing in their sport (volleyball, golf, women's tennis, softball and baseball).

JAY JOHNSON NEW BASEBALL HEAD COACH

Jay Johnson is Point Loma's new head baseball coach. He becomes the third coach in 45 years to head the program.

A familiar presence, Johnson has served as the primary assistant coach since 2001. His duties have included recruiting, game management, offense and third base coach.

The Sea Lions have reached the NAIA regional playoffs each of the last three seasons, finishing third place this spring in the NAIA College World Series and scoring its first-ever outright GSAC title.

"Much of our recent success is attributed to Jay's hard work," said Carroll Land, PLNU athletic director. "Jay is in the perfect position to assess the skills of and to work with the returning players from this year's team."

Johnson's previous coaching duties included the Navy Baseball Club, the Chico Mavericks (16-18 year olds) and as director of Tecolote Youth Baseball Academy. Last summer, he led Navy to a 38-13 record, good for second place in the Western Baseball Association. The previous three summers, the Mavericks went a combined 83-30-1, winning back-to-back North Bay Regional Championship (2001-2002). In 2003, Johnson's Tecolote Reds captured the California State Championship Triple Crown Series.

Johnson played at Point Loma as the starting second baseman from 1999-2000, hitting .326 as a senior.

BRIEFLY...

- Former two-time softball NAIA Player of the Year Cheryl Bolding is batting .233 with 38 hits in the pitching-dominated National Pro Fastpitch League. A member of the Arizona Heat, Bolding was recently selected to play in the NPF All-Star game.
- Also seeing some playing time for the Heat is PLNU alum Jessica Rapoza. In limited action, she is hitting .265.
- Brad Vericker, who holds just about every PLNU offensive record, is in his second season with the San Francisco Giants organization. Vericker is hitting .273 with 28 doubles, 13 homeruns, 51 runs scored and 71 RBI. He plays in the California League (A) for the San Jose Giants.
- All-American pitcher Mike Ekstrom wrapped up the 2004 baseball season by winning a school-record 12 games and hasn't slowed down a bit. A 12th-round draft choice of the San Diego Padres, Mike is off to a 3-0 start for the Eugene Emeralds (SS A) with a team best of 3.07 ERA. In 29 innings of work, he has fanned 28 batters.
- Slugging first baseman Jud Richards, drafted by the San Francisco Giants in the 33rd round is doing well in the Arizona Rookie League and should be assigned to Salem-Keizer (SS A) shortly.



Jay Johnson



Cheryl Bolding



Brad Vericker



Mike Ekstrom

Check out the latest headlines and standings at www.ptloma.edu/Athletics. For up-to-date schedule information call the Sea Lion Sports Hotline at 619.849.2575.