

All-American

Purdue star lands highest honor for a 2nd time

By C.J. Rissak
staff writer

Debbie McDonald doesn't want to be misunderstood. She isn't ungrateful. Hardly.

Being named to the NCAA All-America volleyball second-team two years in a row is no reason for unhappiness. It's just that McDonald has one persistent question regarding her selection last week.

Why?
"I was really surprised," the Purdue junior outside hitter from Redford (Bishop Borgess) said. "I felt personally it was a down year for me. The stats even showed it."

IT'S TRUE. In several categories McDonald didn't match her sophomore year. But what those numbers indicate is that, even in what she considers a sub-par season, she's still pretty darn good.

In Big Ten play, McDonald, a first-team all-conference selection,

finished fifth in hitting percentage (.377), sixth in blocks per game (1.25) and ninth in kills per game (.393). Her season totals: hitting percentage, .394; kills per game, 3.52; blocks per game, 1.00; service aces, 38; digs, 346.

As a sophomore, McDonald: hit .334; had 3.45 kills per game; collected 0.98 blocks per game; had 85 service aces; and finished with 311 digs. The biggest statistical difference came in her hitting percentage and aces. There was a good reason for both, although McDonald refused to accept such an excuse.

LAST SPRING during drills, she injured her back. She missed two weeks, but with rest over the summer felt better. However, when the season began in September, the injury reappeared.

"It affected my serves and hitting mood," said McDonald of the injury. "I hate to blame it on that, though, so I didn't say anything."

McDonald did not miss a match in spite of the pain, which has been diagnosed as back spasms. "The only way it will go away is with a long rest," she said. "I get heat treatments and do back exercises to help strengthen the area. That's all I can do."

But as unhappy as McDonald was with her own performance — "I made a lot more errors hitting and serving, a lot more than last year. What I really need to do is be more consistent" — her biggest disappointment was with the team.

IN '87, the Lady Bollers were 24-14 overall and finished second in the Big Ten with a 14-4 mark. This year, they slipped to 19-15 overall and 9-9 in the conference.

"I was really disappointed," she admitted. "I expected us to do really good, with three seniors on the team. I think we could have been much more consistent."

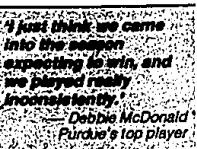
McDonald noted the final weekend as proof. The Lady Bollers lost matches to Iowa and Minnesota, both in five games, and the up-and-down scores illustrate her point.

Against Iowa, Purdue won games one and four by 15-4 and 15-2 scores, but lost the others by scores of 15-9 and 15-10. Against Minnesota, the Lady Bollers lost the first game 15-4, shutout the Lady Gophers 15-0 in game two, then lost 15-6 in game three. The last was won more, each team winning by 16-14 margins.

"I DON'T think we were really up enough for the challenge," said McDonald. "The best volleyball's always been in the west, but the last few years the Midwest has been getting much better."

"I just think we came into the season overconfident, a bit, and we played really incoherently."

That problem shouldn't recur. For one, Purdue will be a young, much less experienced team in '89. Also,



Debbie McDonald
All-America

McDonald thinks she and her teammates have learned their lesson.

"I think we'll do well, because we know what we'll have to do to improve," she said.

McDonald also knows what she

needs to do to improve for her final season of collegiate volleyball. Resting her back is foremost on her mind, she wants to better her "all-around play."

Which should guarantee her a third-straight All-America season.

Switching sports finally pays off for Frynsinger

By C.J. Rissak
staff writer

There is a certain constant in Joan Frynsinger's seemingly topsy-turvy athletic life, something that has allowed her to go from one sport to another without missing a step.

That something is talent. It's apparent Frynsinger, a junior at Northwood Institute from Livonia (Stevens), can be about as good as she wants.

Which — it should be carefully noted — is very, very good.

"I was happy with the way I played this year, which is amazing for me," said Frynsinger. "I'm usually my toughest critic."

The sport Frynsinger was happy playing was volleyball. Make that

just volleyball. For the first time since arriving in Midland, she concentrated on volleyball alone — a smart decision, considering it reaped high honors for herself and her team.

NI ENJOYED its best season ever, reaching the NAIA national tournament and upsetting fifth-ranked Hawaii Pacific and seventh-ranked St. Francis (Ill.) en route to a fifth-place finish and a 34-8 match record. Frynsinger was recognized for her part in the Northwomen's success by gaining NAIA first-team All-America honors.

It was about as perfect a season as Frynsinger could have wished for. "When my coach (Kevin Fegan) called me and told me I was All-American, I said, 'What do I say? I

never got anything like this before.' I don't know how to react," she said. "I'm sure it'll mean more to me when I'm through playing."

Which won't be for another year. Frynsinger is a senior academically, but has one year of athletic eligibility remaining. After this fall's success, she plans to use it.

"When I came into this season, I told myself that I got along with the coaches, and I got along with the players, then I would come back," said Frynsinger. "This was the best season mentally I've ever had."

AND FINDING mental peace of mind is something Frynsinger had sought since arriving at NI. Her first two years, she tried to find it by playing both volleyball and basketball. That drained her.

"I love basketball," she said. "But I was always coming into the season late because of volleyball. I was tired to begin with."

Frynsinger knew she had to make a choice. She did. She talked to the then-new basketball coach, Mary Viellig and decided to devote her athletic career to basketball.

By season's end, Frynsinger realized she'd made the right decision, but had chosen the wrong sport.

"To be honest, I just didn't get along with the basketball coach," she said. "I wasn't improving. When I came into the season, I thought if I could put in a whole year I would improve."

THE 6-FOOT-center did lead the Northwomen in rebounding, blocked shots and steals, and was their second-leading scorer, but to Frynsinger "that wasn't enough. I wasn't satisfied mentally. Maybe I put too much responsibility (for my improvement) on the coaching, but I wasn't learning anything."

Frynsinger considered transferring, but she'd have just one season of basketball eligibility remaining. So she opted to return to volleyball.

When this season started, Frynsinger knew she'd finally made the right move. "Since I wasn't playing double sports, I was so much more relaxed," she said. "It was like a huge weight was taken off my shoulders."

Coming back to volleyball after a year's absence wasn't easy. "I was a perfectionist before," she said. "I would put a lot of pressure on myself. This year, I decided I would just do my best. The only promise I made to myself was to work hard every single day."

"People were depending on me, but I knew if I let myself be best I wouldn't let anybody down. I made mistakes — everybody does. But I didn't let it bother me. I accepted it for being a human error. I didn't overanalyze it. I was a little more rational about it."

HER RATIONALITY allowed Frynsinger to rely more on her natural ability, which is formidable. Her All-America status was well-deserved; she set six school records during the season. Her single-season marks were for attack percentage (.553), total blocks (199), solo blocks (80) and digs (525).

In addition, she established career marks in solo (206) and total (531) blocks. She is currently second on the career list in kills (1,024).

Frynsinger also proved herself as a clutch player. She had the winning kill in the triumph over Hawaii Pacific, and the winning block in the victory over St. Francis. Her performance earned her NAIA all-tournament second-team status.

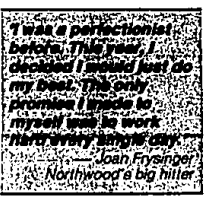
And her team's record left her mentally content at the end of a season for the first time — although it didn't take long for her to start looking ahead.

"The first thing I said (after the NAIA tournament) was, 'We broke the ice for the future.' That was the first time we'd ever gotten out of pool play at nationals," she said.

With all but one starter returning, Frynsinger is already eyeing next season. And for once, she won't be burdened with doubts regarding her choice of sports. She knows she's in the right place.



Joan Frynsinger
NAIA All-American



Eagles grab 2 straight

Orchard Lake St. Mary improved its overall record to 6-7 with wins over the University of Windsor, 96-82; and Northwood Institute, 93-77, Dec. 7 and 10.

The Eagles, fifth in the District 23 power point standings, put their modest win streak on the line Saturday at Lake Superior State College.

"We are coming down to crunch time, we have the talent to become a very good team," coach Glen Donahue said. "Everyone must turn up the positive switch and work harder if we are to achieve the success that our potential indicates."

In the Eagles' win over Northwood, Jim Butcher (17), James Curtis (15), Denny Butcher (13), James Lakes and Kevin Nicefield

(11) all reached double figures in scoring. St. Mary's led 40-20 with seven minutes left in the first half and Northwood got no closer than eight points the rest of the way.

Denny Butcher and Curtis sparked the Eagles' win over Windsor with 17 points apiece. Curtis added eight assists.

Windsor led 45-40 at halftime, but St. Mary's recovered and took the lead for good, 57-55, on a layup by Denny Butcher. The win was the second this season for St. Mary over Windsor.

Senior Bob Bringman and Nicefield each contributed 13 points to St. Mary's cause. Lakes added 10 points and 10 rebounds.

sports shorts

SOCCER TRYOUTS

Girls with birth years from 1975 through 1978 who would like to play soccer for the Livonia Hawks, should contact Tom Coyne at 427-8596 or Paul Dugan at 478-0849. The players will be playing in the Little League Premier Soccer League.

In addition, adults interested in trying for coaching positions

should contact Dugan.

COACHES NEEDED

• Mercy High School is looking for coaches in the following capacities and sports: varsity cheerleading, track assistant and skiing.

Send resume to athletic director Suzanne Brown at 29300 11 Mile, Farmington Hills 48018, or call her at 478-2836.

the week ahead

PREP BOYS HOOPS
Monday, Dec. 19
D.H. Crestwood at Lufkin, Westland, 5:30 p.m.
Clermontville at South Lyon, 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 20
Lufkin at Livonia, 7:30 p.m.
Farmington at Livonia, 7:30 p.m.
Phy. Salem at Phy. Canton, 7:30 p.m.
N. Farmington at W.L. Western, 7:30 p.m.
Westland at Bellevue, 7:30 p.m.
Wayne Memorial at Garden City, 7:30 p.m.
Redford CC at Canton McKinley, 7:30 p.m.
St. Agatha at Oakwood, 7:30 p.m.
Lufkin at Westland, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 22
Wayne Memorial at Lincoln Park, 7:30 p.m.
Fav. Harrison at Livonia, 7:30 p.m.
Liv. Churchill at Northville, 7:30 p.m.
N. Farmington at Livonia, 7:30 p.m.
Farmington at Westland, 7:30 p.m.

Bishop Borgess at Saginaw, 7:30 p.m.

PREP HOCKEY
Wednesday, Dec. 21
Redford CC vs. Windsor Assumption at Redford Ice Arena, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 22
Liv. Churchill at Oak. Richard Tournay, TBA.
Liv. Stevenson vs. Bloomfield Andover.
Liv. Farmington vs. Bloomfield Andover at Detroit Skating Club, 8 and 8:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 23
Liv. Churchill at Oak. Richard Tournay, TBA.

MEN'S COLLEGE HOOPS
Monday, Dec. 19
Oakland CC at Detroit Jordan, 7:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOOPS
Monday, Dec. 19
Schoolcraft CC at St. Clair, 7:30 p.m.

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