

HOPE COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL GAME NOTES

Champions of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA), the Hope College Flying Dutch are appearing in the NCAA Division III volleyball championships for the sixth time in school history. The Flying Dutch last appeared in post-season play in 2006. The Flying Dutch bring a 26-6 record into the tournament. Five of the team's six losses came at the hands of teams who are also in the NCAA tournament -- Carthage, Calvin, Heidelberg, Ohio Northern and Wittenberg.

Hope posted a 15-1 record en route to winning the MIAA conference championship, the team's second in four years. The Flying Dutch gained the MIAA's automatic berth in the NCAA playoffs in an unusual way. As the regular season champion of the MIAA, Hope was scheduled to host the NCAA-qualifying tournament last weekend. However, the Hope College campus was ordered closed by health authorities when a Noro-like-virus swept across the student body. The tournament had to be cancelled, too. By league rule Hope, as league champion, gained the automatic berth. The Hope campus remained closed until Wednesday, Nov. 11, further complicating things, because the Flying Dutch were not allowed to practice until then.

Becky Schmidt, in her fifth season as coach, was a Division III volleyball All-American at Hope (1998). Her Hope coaching record entering the NCAA tournament is 121-57. Her collegiate coaching record, which includes three seasons at the University of Redlands, Calif., is 159-89.

Four Hope players received all-conference honors from the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA). Three players received All-MIAA first team honors -- junior setter Andrea Helminiak of Maumee, Ohio (Anthony Wayne HS), senior outside hitter Nora Slenk of Holland, Mich. (Holland Christian HS), and sophomore middle hitter Kara VandeGuchte of Hamilton, Mich. (Hamilton HS). Sophomore outside hitter Cassidy Bolthuis of Nunica, Mich. (Spring Lake HS) was voted to the All-MIAA second team.

First round opponent Heidelberg defeated Hope 3-2 at the Midwest Challenge on October 31st -- 23-25,25-16,25-20,14-25,15-10.

MIAA STAT LEADERS

- Sophomore Kara VandeGuchte (Hamilton, Mich./Hamilton HS) topped the MIAA in hitting percentage (.381)
- Junior setter Andrea Helminiak (Maumee, Ohio/Anthony Wayne HS) was the league-leader in assists, averaging 11.38 per set.
- Sophomore Traci Baker (Grandville, Mich./Tri-Unity Christian HS) led the MIAA in service aces (0.47 per set) while sophomore Cassidy Bulthuis (Nunica, Mich./Spring Lake HS) was second (0.45 per set).

NCAA STAT LEADERS

According to the most recent NCAA stats (10/26/08), Hope ranked sixth in Division III in kills per set (13.12) and 11th in assists per set (11.87). Junior setter Andrea Helminiak (Maumee, Ohio/Anthony Wayne HS) ranked 20th in assists per set (10.24).

HOPE IN THE NCAA

Hope has a 4-5 record in previous NCAA tournament appearances.

1987

Hope defeated Buffalo, N.Y., 15-5, 12-15, 15-3, 15-11
Illinois Benedictine defeated Hope, 8-15, 15-8, 15-11, 12-15, 15-12

1997

Ohio Northern defeated Hope, 11-15, 13-15, 15-8, 15-6, 16-14

1998

Hope defeated Calvin, 11-15, 15-7, 15-5, 16-14
Wittenberg, Ohio defeated Hope, 7-15, 15-8, 15-3, 13-15, 15-13

2000

Hope defeated DePauw, Ind. 15-12, 2-15, 15-6, 15-8
Wisconsin-Whitewater defeated Hope 15-4, 15-5, 15-7

2006

Hope defeated Ohio Northern 30-24, 31-29, 23-30, 30-28
Calvin defeated Hope 30-23, 30-25, 30-32, 30-21