



## LSU Alma Mater

Where stately oaks and broad magnolias  
shade inspiring halls,  
There stands our dear old Alma Mater  
who to us recalls  
Fond memories that waken in our hearts  
a tender glow,  
And make us happy for the love  
that we have learned to know.

All hail to thee our Alma Mater,  
molder of mankind,  
May greater glory, love unending  
be forever thine.  
Our worth in life will be thy worth  
we pray to keep it true,  
And may thy spirit live in us ... Forever L-S-U.

# Contents

- INTRO
- THIS IS LSU
- TIGERS
- COACHES
- OPPONENTS
- REVIEW
- HISTORY
- RECORDS
- LSU
- MEDIA

Alma Mater	1	Shannon Balikowsky/Angela Bensed	40	Letterwinners	73
Table of Contents	2	Brittney Johnson/Haley Reuther	41	Maravich Center Records	74
Quick Facts	3	Tania Schatow	42		
2007 Season Preview	4			<b>RECORDS</b>	<b>75</b>
2007 Roster/Roster Breakdown	6			Individual Match Records	76
		<b>COACHES</b>	<b>43</b>	Individual Season Records	78
<b>THIS IS LSU</b>	<b>7</b>	Head Coach Fran Flory	44	Individual Career Records	79
Fran Flory Volleyball	8	Assistant Coach Steve Loeswick	46	Team Match Records	80
Cox Academic Center for Student-Athletes	10	Assistant Coach Jill Lytle Wilson	47	Team Match/Season Records	81
Academic Success	11	Support Staff	48	Miscellaneous Records	82
Prominent Alumni	12			Yearly Leaders	83
City of Baton Rouge	14	<b>OPPONENTS</b>	<b>49</b>	1,000-Kill Club	84
State of Louisiana	15	SEC Opponents	50	1,000-Dig Club	85
Campus Life	16	Non-Conference Opponents	52	Year-by-Year Results	86
LSU Greats	18	Tournament/Travel Information	53	All-Time Series Records	91
Shaquille O'Neal CHAMPS/Life Skills Program	20			All-Time Coaching Records	92
Maravich Center	21	<b>SEASON REVIEW</b>	<b>55</b>		
Athletic Training	22	2006 Season Review	56	<b>LSU</b>	<b>93</b>
Strength & Conditioning	23	2006 Results/Statistics	58	LSU Athletics Championship Tradition	94
Southeastern Conference	24	2006 Match-by-Match Statistics	59	President Dr. William Jenkins	96
		2006 Honors/Season Superlatives	60	Chancellor Sean O'Keefe	97
<b>TIGERS</b>	<b>25</b>	2006 SEC Review	61	Athletics Director Skip Bertman	98
Michelle Hensgens	26	2006 SEC Statistics	62		
Elena Martinez	28	2006 Senior Tribute	63	<b>MEDIA INFORMATION</b>	<b>99</b>
Marina Skender	30			Media Guidelines	100
Kyna Washington	32	<b>HISTORY</b>	<b>65</b>	Media List	101
Brittnee Cooper	34	Postseason History	66	SEC SID Directory	102
Lauren DeGirolamo	36	SEC History	68	LSUsports.net	103
Maggie Lonergan	38	All-Americans	69	Radio/TV Roster	104
		Honors & Awards	70		

7



25



43



49



55



65



75



93



99



# QUICK FACTS

- INTRO
- THIS IS LSU
- TIGERS
- COACHES
- OPPONENTS
- REVIEW
- HISTORY
- RECORDS
- LSU
- MEDIA

## VOLLEYBALL INFORMATION

<b>HEAD COACH:</b>	Fran Flory
<b>ALMA MATER, YEAR:</b>	Texas, 1984
<b>CAREER RECORD:</b>	265-229 (16 years)
<b>RECORD AT LSU:</b>	155-115 (Nine years)
<b>ASSISTANT COACHES:</b>	Steve Loeswick (Southern Cal, 1996) Jill Lytle Wilson (LSU, 2001)

## TEAM INFORMATION

<b>2006 RECORD:</b>	26-6
<b>2006 SEC RECORD:</b>	16-4 (1st - West)
<b>2006 POSTSEASON:</b>	NCAA Tournament
<b>STARTERS RETURNING/LOST:</b>	3/3 + Libero
<b>LETTERWINNERS RETURNING/LOST:</b>	7/5
<b>NEWCOMERS:</b>	5
<b>ALL-TIME RECORD:</b>	761-445 (.631, 33 years)
<b>ALL-TIME SEC RECORD:</b>	174-125 (.582, 24 years)
<b>SEC TOURNAMENT APPEARANCES:</b>	27
<b>ALL-TIME SEC TOURNAMENT RECORD:</b>	27-27 (.500)
<b>SEC TOURNAMENT TITLES:</b>	4 (1986, 1989, 1990, 1991)
<b>NCAA TOURNAMENT APPEARANCES:</b>	8
<b>NCAA TOURNAMENT RECORD:</b>	10-8 (.556)
<b>FINAL FOUR APPEARANCES:</b>	2 (1990, 1991)

## UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Baton Rouge, La.
<b>FOUNDED:</b>	1860
<b>ENROLLMENT:</b>	29,317
<b>NICKNAME:</b>	Tigers or Fighting Tigers
<b>COLORS:</b>	Purple & Gold
<b>MASCOT:</b>	Mike the Tiger (Bengal tiger)
<b>HOME FACILITY (CAPACITY):</b>	Maravich Center (13,373)
<b>CONFERENCE:</b>	Southeastern

## UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	Dr. William L. Jenkins
<b>CHANCELLOR:</b>	Sean O'Keefe
<b>FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE:</b>	Dydia DeLyser

## ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

<b>ATHLETICS DIRECTOR:</b>	J. Stanley "Skip" Bertman
<b>SR. ASSOCIATE AD/SWA:</b>	Judy Southard
<b>SR. ASSOCIATE AD/OPERATIONS:</b>	Verge Ausberry
<b>SR. ASSOCIATE AD/EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:</b>	Herb Vincent
<b>ASSOCIATE AD/INTERNAL RELATIONS:</b>	Bo Bahnsen
<b>ASSOCIATE AD/BUSINESS:</b>	Mark Ewing
<b>ASSOCIATE AD/COMPLIANCE:</b>	Bo Kerin
<b>ASSISTANT AD/OPERATIONS:</b>	Eddie Nunez
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	Baton Rouge, LA 70803



LSU bid farewell to four outstanding seniors - Melody Clark, Lauren Leaumont, Kassi Mikulik and Daniela Romero - in a ceremony following a win over Alabama on Nov. 10.

## MEDIA INFORMATION

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<b>LSU WEBSITE:</b>	www.LSUsports.net

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<b>ASSOCIATE SID:</b>	Laurie Cannon
<b>ASSOCIATE SID (VOLLEYBALL):</b>	Melissa Foley
<b>ASSOCIATE SID:</b>	Bill Franques
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<b>PHOTOGRAPHY COORDINATOR:</b>	Steve Franz

## LSU SPORTS PROPERTIES

<b>DIRECTOR OF TELEVISION:</b>	Kevin Wagner
<b>MANAGER OF TELEVISION:</b>	John Schiebe
<b>TELEVISION PRODUCER:</b>	David Landry
<b>DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING:</b>	Jim Hawthorne
<b>LSU SPORTS INTERACTIVE MANAGER:</b>	Todd Politz

## Credits and Covers

The 2007 volleyball media guide is a product of the LSU Sports Information Department.

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Just as a volleyball play progresses on the court from the serve through the terminating point, the LSU volleyball team has progressed from one that was winless in conference play in 1997 to a program in search of its third straight Southeastern Conference Western Division title and NCAA Tournament berth with an eye on continuing to advance forward.

Despite returning two of the best outside hitters in the SEC and an SEC All-Freshman middle blocker, LSU will have to replace a pair of key components from the last four years. In a tale of positions, the veteran leadership of junior outside hitters Marina Skender (Zagreb, Croatia) and Kyna Washington (Houston, Texas), combined with the experience of sophomore middle blocker Lauren DeGirolamo (Bellefonte, Ill.), will have to rely on a new starting setter and libero this season.

Skender and Washington have been two-year starters, while DeGirolamo is in her third year with the Tigers after redshirting in her first season. Despite that commanding presence, LSU will have to replace All-American setter Daniela Romero, who led the Tiger offense for four seasons, and libero Kassi Mikulik, who became a vital tool in the LSU lineup with her serve receive and ball control.

If the Tigers can adjust to this change in personnel early in the season, LSU is poised to put together another dominating season as it can spread out the attack throughout the lineup and run an offense that is a threat from many angles.

### MIDDLE BLOCKER

The Tigers return one of the best young middle blockers in the SEC from a season ago in DeGirolamo while adding in outstanding talent in sophomore Brittnee Cooper (Houston, Texas) and freshman Tania Schatow (Fraser, Mich.).

The Louisiana Freshman of the Year and SEC All-Freshman team selection, DeGirolamo ranked third in the league and ninth in the nation in blocks per game a year ago. In addition, she led LSU and ranked 10th in the conference in attacking percentage.

"Lauren has always been and will continue to be a true stabilizing force both offensively and defensively," said LSU head coach Fran Flory. "We've added a few things for her offensively to make her a little more versatile. She continues to improve and become more physical and quicker. After an All-Freshman year, I look for her to have an outstanding sophomore season."

Contributing in many of the Tigers' matches both in the middle and along the right side while developing as a freshman, Cooper will make an immediate impact on the LSU

lineup as she enters her sophomore campaign.

"Brittnee Cooper really had a wonderful freshman year, especially in the spring," said Flory. "She developed into a true impacting middle blocker and middle attacker. She's going to be a terminator for us and she's going to be a key in our offense."

A talented two-sport standout, Schatow (Fraser, Mich.) joins the LSU squad after leading her Fraser High School team to the Michigan state title match in 2005. The towering 6-4 freshman was named the "Best Volleyball Player in Michigan" by Rise Magazine during her senior season.

"Tania certainly added size to our team," said Flory. "She will develop into a terminating offensive player and certainly a force blocking with her wing span. She is going to be a great player. It will take her a little time to develop but by midseason I look for her to be a force in our lineup."

### OUTSIDE HITTER

After an outstanding season in 2006 that saw the Tigers rank second in the SEC in kills per game and fourth in hitting percentage, LSU is in the enviable position of having two of the best outside hitters in the conference, while adding a pair of new faces.

The Tigers' first two-time All-SEC selection since Meagan Davis in 2000-2001, Skender led the league and ranked sixth in the nation in service aces per game. In addition, the junior led the team and ranked in the top 10 in the conference in kills per game. She enters the 2007 campaign with added strength and she will be called upon to demonstrate her leadership on the court.

"After certainly being a very impacting player and key for our team over the last two years, Marina has now become much more physical and stronger," said Flory. "I think that she will be much more durable this year. She'll be a more balanced and mature player. I think she will be the leader of our group."

Washington has been a stalwart on the Tiger outside for the last two seasons, developing her raw athletic skills to become an outstanding player. The junior ranked second on the team in kills and service aces last year while ranking fourth in both blocks and digs.

"Kyna has matured as a player," said Flory. "In the past she really relied on being a great athlete who played volleyball and now she is at the phase where she is a great volleyball player who is a great athlete. That maturation is going to make her that much more successful and efficient for us this year."

INTRO
THIS IS LSU
TIGERS
COACHES
OPPONENTS
REVIEW
HISTORY
RECORDS
LSU
MEDIA

A valuable practice player a year ago while she gained experience as a redshirt, Shannon Balikowsky (Baton Rouge, La.) will compete for playing time on the outside this season after an outstanding local career at Woodlawn High School.

"Shannon had a great year of training and developing as a redshirt," said Flory. "She has overcome some injuries that were a setback in the spring. She is a great physical talent who is becoming a solid volleyball player."

A pleasant addition to the Tiger signing class, Angela Bensed (Plano, Texas) helped Bishop Lynch High School, alma mater of former Tiger standout Regan Hood, to a 2004 Texas Private and Parochial School state title. After transferring to Frisco Centennial, she helped lead her team to the district championship.

"Angela has really been a nice surprise in this year's recruiting class," said Flory. "She developed a little more quickly through club volleyball as a terminator. She has developed all phases of her game so that she can potentially be a sixth rotation player early in her career for us. We're excited about how quickly she has developed."

## RIGHT SIDE

The Tigers have several options along the right side this season, including the option of Skender returning to her more natural position while also bringing in a pair of players who have the ability to contribute immediately.

In addition to action on the left side, Skender may also return to the position where she starred in 2005. In her freshman season, she recorded 2.82 kills per game with 0.90 blocks per game and 1.75 digs per game. Skender also recorded the second-best hitting percentage in LSU history with 20 or more attempts with a .700 clip against Auburn.

"Marina is a natural right side player and we've had to move her to the left side," said Flory. "We would love to have her on the right side and she will probably play right side at some point this year. She has the most upper arm ball control of any player I've coached. She has a very precise arm and a very frustrating player to play against."

While developing in the middle, Schatow may have the opportunity to get on the court earlier in her career on the right side. Her exceptional blocking ability will provide a compliment to DeGiroalomo and Cooper as Schatow is able to close the block.

"On the right side Tania's blocking ability is outstanding," said Flory. "She's a natural blocker and that gives her an opportunity to get on the court a little faster with Brittnee and Lauren. She's also very good offensively behind the setter, so she definitely has the opportunity to be on the court on the right side early."

One of the most heralded volleyball players to come out of Baton Rouge in many years, Brittney Johnson will likely provide the Tigers with an option both as a setter and on the right side. The three-time all-state selection and the Baton Rouge Advocate's "Star of

"All three are trying to step in to take over ball control after losing Kassi Mikulik," Flory said of the competition at the libero position. "That will be a huge deal for the success of this team."

After seeing action as a defensive specialist and for her serving over her first three seasons, Michelle Hensgens (Morgan City, La.) returns as the only LSU senior in 2007 after showing continued progress and development. The quintessential student-athlete, Hensgens is a player who truly epitomizes what it means to be a Tiger.

"Michelle has probably been the most dependable, hardest working and most loyal player on this team for the last three years," said Flory. "We look for her to have a great senior year. She is the prototypical student-athlete. She is balanced in all ways. She is a great leader with great insight and somebody who has become very reliable on the court in her passing and defensive game."

Elena Martinez (New Orleans, La.) was a key defender in the Tiger lineup last year after seeing limited action as a freshman due to an injury. An outstanding natural defender, the junior averaged almost two digs a game while adding 10 service aces a year ago and continues to improve in other aspects of her game.

"Elena is probably the best defender I've ever coached," said Flory. "Her ball control and serve receive has improved and continues to improve. Her strength is her ability to read hitters and make outstanding plays. I think she developed a much higher level of discipline with an understanding of the system and understanding of her responsibilities. She became and will be a vital part of handing the ball in the fall."

A final addition to the 2007 roster is another outstanding local product in Haley Reuther from New Orleans. The 2006 Miss Louisiana Volleyball comes in as a converted outside hitter and was the most valuable player in the Louisiana All-Star game.

"Haley is just a smooth, talented, agile kid who is really an outside hitter but will be a defensive specialist for us," said Flory. "Potentially she could see some outside hitting time, especially in practice. She is just a fighter and a competitive, Louisiana-type kid who will just get after it. She will be a great addition."

## SCHEDULE

LSU has an outstanding pre-conference schedule in 2007 that will help ease the newcomers into the lineup early in the year and gradually test the Tigers as the season progresses. The slate includes three pre-conference tournaments, among which is the LSU-hosted Mizuno Tiger Classic, the 20-match conference schedule and two non-conference matches. LSU will match up against eight teams that advanced to the 2006 NCAA Tournament, including Notre Dame and a league-record six teams that advanced from the SEC.

## *pro-gres-sion* [pruh-gresh-uhn] – noun

1. *the act of progressing or advancing forward.*

2. *a passing successively from one member of a series to the next.*

Stars" for volleyball, she was both a setter and an attacker as University High School advanced to the state semifinals last year.

"Brittney will have a duel role probably," said Flory. "She is a left-handed player who is very mobile offensively and has the ability to terminate. It will take her a little while to adjust to the physicality of college game, but once she gets there, she will be a terminator. We are excited about the dimension she's going to add as a lefty on the right side."

## SETTER

After losing four-year starter and 2006 All-American Daniela Romero to graduation, LSU will have to find a new player to run the Tiger offense in 2007. LSU has two outstanding athletes to select from as the pair compete for the starting role.

Playing behind Romero a year ago, Maggie Lonergan (Antioch, Ill.), may not have seen playing time often, but she did get a year of experience under one of the best in school history. Prior to coming to LSU, she led the Sky High Volleyball Club to back-to-back third place finishes nationally in the 15 Club National Division and 16 Club National Division in 2003 and 2004 while being named to the all-tournament teams both years.

"Maggie did a great job this past spring taking over after Dee Romero graduated," said Flory. "It's difficult to step into an All-American's shoes, but she truly became a leader on the court for this team. She developed great trust in the hitters and players around her. I think she'll be very prepared to step in this fall and compete with Brittney for that starting setter role, which has not been established at this point."

In addition to her time on the right side, Johnson is likely to see considerable playing time at the setter position. The newcomer will need to learn the LSU offense but comes in with the advantage of having watched the Tigers for the few years while playing across campus at LSU's University High School.

"Brittney has the ability to become an elite level setter," said Flory. "The athleticism is there and she has all the tools. It will just be a matter of her developing into the collegiate game and her understanding of how to truly run our offense."

## LIBERO/DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST

To fill the vital role of libero in 2007, the Tigers will have several solid options that will all battle for the starting position, while all three defensive specialists should see action since the serve receivers are essential to the team's success.

"I think our schedule is ideal," said Flory. "We've worked really hard to develop a schedule that is good for us. After losing the type of kids in our line-up that we had last year, it will give us a chance to slowly work into the season. Hopefully we will have the opportunity to see some kids in some different positions early in our opening weekend and then kind of jump into the fire before SEC's start."

For the second straight year, the Tigers will open the season with the Mizuno Tiger Classic in the Maravich Center. As part of the tournament, LSU will host in-state rivals New Orleans and UL-Monroe, while also facing Saint Louis in a rematch of a 3-1 win in St. Louis last season.

Following the Tiger Classic, LSU will travel to Houston for the Mizuno Invitational II hosted by Rice. Along with the tournament host, the Tigers will face Illinois and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. LSU closes out the pre-conference schedule by traveling to Des Moines, Iowa, for the Iowa Challenge. The Tigers will take on tournament host Drake along with Iowa and Iowa State.

"We will play some very difficult teams in Rice, Illinois, Iowa and Iowa State," said Flory. "All four of those teams are going to be at the top half, if not top, of their conference or division within their conference. I think we have some great challenges, but I think they are the right type of challenges for this team."

The SEC will be playing a double round-robin regular season format for the second year in 2007. In 2006, the SEC made the first dramatic alteration of the volleyball format in 15 years by doing away with the SEC Tournament. Under the new format, LSU won its second-straight SEC Western Division title and finished second overall in the conference race.

"We are excited about the SEC schedule," said Flory. "We are continuing to play a double round, playing everyone on our home court again and at their place again."

While in the midst of the conference schedule, LSU will step outside of the SEC and face a pair of opponents in the Maravich Center. The Tigers will host Notre Dame on Oct. 23, before closing out the regular season against Tulane on Nov. 24. LSU will then await an NCAA Tournament bid as tournament action begins at sub-regional sites on Nov. 29.

"I think our overall schedule is one of the best schedules we could have for this team," said Flory. "It worked out just perfect for us. It'll give us the opportunity to have significant wins and the opportunity to be seen as an NCAA Tournament team early in the season. Then we can hopefully continue our quest to be SEC West champions and step into another championship as well."

# Roster

## Numerical

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	CL./EXP.	HOMETOWN/PREVIOUS SCHOOL
2	Brittney Johnson	S/RS	6-0	Fr./HS	Baton Rouge, La./University HS
3	Maggie Loneragan	S	5-8	So./1L	Antioch, Ill./Antioch Community HS
4	Lauren DeGirolamo	MB	6-1	So./1L	Belleville, Ill./Belleville West HS
5	Angela Bendsend	OH	6-1	Fr./HS	Plano, Texas/Frisco Centennial HS
7	Kyna Washington	OH	5-11	Jr./2L	Houston, Texas/Westfield HS
9	Haley Reuther	DS/L	5-8	Fr./HS	New Orleans, La./Dominican HS
11	Elena Martinez	DS/L	5-8	Jr./2L	New Orleans, La./Newman School
12	Marina Skender	OH/RS	5-11	Jr./2L	Zagreb, Croatia/First Economic School
13	Michelle Hensgens	DS/L	5-3	Sr./3L	Morgan City, La./Central Catholic HS
19	Tania Schatow	MB/RS	6-4	Fr./HS	Fraser, Mich./Fraser HS
25	Brittnee Cooper	MB	6-3	So./1L	Houston, Texas/Thurgood Marshall HS
28	Shannon Balikowsky	OH	5-11	Fr./RS	Baton Rouge, La./Woodlawn HS

## Alphabetical

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	CL./EXP.	HOMETOWN/PREVIOUS SCHOOL
28	Shannon Balikowsky	OH	5-11	Fr./RS	Baton Rouge, La./Woodlawn HS
5	Angela Bendsend	OH	6-1	Fr./HS	Plano, Texas/Frisco Centennial HS
25	Brittnee Cooper	MB	6-3	So./1L	Houston, Texas/Thurgood Marshall HS
4	Lauren DeGirolamo	MB	6-1	So./1L	Belleville, Ill./Belleville West HS
13	Michelle Hensgens	DS/L	5-3	Sr./3L	Morgan City, La./Central Catholic HS
2	Brittney Johnson	S/RS	6-0	Fr./HS	Baton Rouge, La./University HS
3	Maggie Loneragan	S	5-8	So./1L	Antioch, Ill./Antioch Community HS
11	Elena Martinez	DS/L	5-8	Jr./2L	New Orleans, La./Newman School
9	Haley Reuther	DS/L	5-8	Fr./HS	New Orleans, La./Dominican HS
19	Tania Schatow	MB/RS	6-4	Fr./HS	Fraser, Mich./Fraser HS
12	Marina Skender	OH/RS	5-11	Jr./2L	Zagreb, Croatia/First Economic School
7	Kyna Washington	OH	5-11	Jr./2L	Houston, Texas/Westfield HS

**HEAD COACH** Fran Flory (Texas, 1984)

**Record at LSU** 155-115/Nine seasons

**Overall Record** 265-229/16 seasons

## ASSISTANT COACHES

Steve Loeswick (Southern California, 1996)

Jill Lytle Wilson (LSU, 2001)

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

**SHANNON BALIKOWSKY** bah-li-COW-ski

**LAUREN DEGIROLAMO** dee-ger-RAHL-a-mo

**MICHELLE HENSGENS** HENS-gins

**MAGGIE LONERAGAN** LON-er-gun

**ELENA MARTINEZ** e-LANE-uh mar-teen-ez

**HALEY REUTHER** ruth-er

**TANIA SCHATOW** Tonya scha-toe

**KYNA WASHINGTON** KY-nuh

**STEVE LOESWICK** LOWS-wick

**FRAN FLORY** Floor-ee

## 2007 TIGERS...

### BY STATE

#### ILLINOIS (2):

Lauren DeGirolamo  
Maggie Loneragan

#### LOUISIANA (5):

Shannon Balikowsky  
Michelle Hensgens  
Brittney Johnson  
Elena Martinez  
Haley Reuther

#### MICHIGAN (1):

Tania Schatow

#### TEXAS (3):

Angela Bendsend  
Brittnee Cooper  
Kyna Washington

### BY CLASS

#### SENIORS (1):

Michelle Hensgens

#### JUNIORS (3):

Elena Martinez  
Marina Skender  
Kyna Washington

#### SOPHOMORES (3):

Brittnee Cooper  
Lauren DeGirolamo  
Maggie Loneragan

#### FRESHMEN (5):

Shannon Balikowsky  
Angela Bendsend  
Brittney Johnson  
Haley Reuther  
Tania Schatow

### BY POSITION

#### MIDDLE BLOCKER (3):

Brittnee Cooper  
Lauren DeGirolamo  
Tania Schatow

#### OUTSIDE HITTER (5):

Shannon Balikowsky  
Angela Bendsend  
Marina Skender  
Kyna Washington

#### RIGHT SIDE (3):

Brittney Johnson  
Tania Schatow  
Marina Skender

#### SETTER (2):

Brittney Johnson  
Maggie Loneragan

#### DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST (2):

Michelle Hensgens  
Elena Martinez  
Haley Reuther