

# FLORIDA STATE



# SAND VOLLEYBALL

2012

INAUGURAL SEASON



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## SEMINOLE SAND VOLLEYBALL COMPLEX





## FSU SAND VOLLEYBALL FACTS AN EMERGING SPORT

- Collegiate sand volleyball is an “emerging sport.” It has 10 years to gain the minimum 40 sponsoring institutions for two years in a row required to be considered an NCAA championship sport.
- Sand volleyball has three scholarships to divide among a roster of 15 players in 2011-12. The sport will add one scholarship each year for the next three years to eventually get to six divisible scholarships in 2014-15.
- Players will not wear the “traditional” sand volleyball uniform of a bikini. The AVCA concept calls for a two-piece uniform- shorts or briefs and a top, or a one-piece.
- Currently, there are 15 collegiate programs who have confirmed that they will field a varsity sand volleyball team for the 2011-2012 school year. All of these schools are Division I programs.

### THE RULES

- Each team competition is called a “dual” and will consist of five matches of pairs. The winning team will need to win three matches in a best-of-five format. The separate matches will be conducted as best-of-three set competitions, with rally scoring to 21 in the first two sets and to 15 in the third. Teams must win by at least two points in all cases.
- Sand volleyball differs from court volleyball in ways other than the numbers of players. No open hand tipping is allowed. The block touch is allowed as the first of three allowable contacts. Coaches may only speak to players or give any feedback during time-outs or in between sets. Finally, to mitigate the impact of the sun and wind, the players switch sides of the court every seven points in a 21 point set and every five points in a 15 point set. The court is smaller at 8’ m x 8’ m, while indoor is 9’ m x 9’ m.

### AT FLORIDA STATE

- Head Coach Danalee Corso was the first full-time sand volleyball coach in the country.
- FSU’s inaugural sand volleyball team features 16 players, nine sand-only players and seven players from the FSU indoor squad.
- If a player has an indoor volleyball scholarship, they can play sand volleyball, but a sand volleyball scholarship athlete cannot play on the indoor volleyball team.

### GAMEDAY IN TALLAHASSEE

- All competitions will be played at the sand volleyball courts, located north of the soccer and softball complex and between the track and field complex and the parking garage.
- Parking will be available in the lot across from the courts and in the adjacent parking garage.
- Spectators are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs to the event, but there will also be eight sets of bleachers.
- No alcohol is permitted. No dogs are allowed. Tents behind the bleachers are permissible.





## 2012 SEASON PREVIEW

Florida State formally kicked off the start of its newest sport's inaugural season on Jan. 20 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at FSU's brand-new Seminole Sand Volleyball Complex.

The seeds for what is likely to form one of the nation's premier programs were planted months ago with the hiring of head coach Danalee Corso, the commitment by the Seminoles' athletic department to a top-notch facility and the Garnet & Gold indoor volleyball team's unprecedented run to the Final Four.

Corso, a former USA national team coach and a 13-year beach volleyball professional, was hired in June.

"With sand volleyball being a new emergent sport for the NCAA, I wanted to be a part of a university that believes in the sport's potential," Corso said after being hired. "FSU is setting itself up for success and I wanted to be part of that momentum. With the popularity of sand volleyball at the Olympics, around the world and at the junior level, I am certain it will be a great addition to the NCAA. I am also confident that sand volleyball's inclusion to the NCAA will help grow indoor volleyball by bringing new marketing opportunities and exposure, which is great news for women's sports in general."

The state-of-the-art five-court sand facility including lights was completed in January.

Two months before, FSU's indoor volleyball completed its best season in school history, winning the Atlantic Coast Conference Championship and advancing to the NCAA Final Four for the first time in school history.

Seven members of the FSU indoor team will help serve as building blocks for the inaugural sand volleyball squad at FSU, including All-America seniors Kate Stepanova and Visnja Djurdjevic. That pair is expected to be two of the team's top players.

Additionally, Corso and FSU Director of Volleyball Chris Poole (who is also the indoor volleyball head coach) did a fantastic job bringing in some of the country's top sand volleyball prospects.

The result is what many in the volleyball community across the nation expect to be the top sand volleyball program in its first year of collegiate competition.

FSU opened the season on March 4 at UAB before traveling to Tulane the next day.

From March 8-9, the Seminoles competed at the Clash of the Collegians at the Aspire



Florida State officially kicked off its inaugural sand volleyball campaign on Jan. 20 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Above is head coach Danalee Corso (middle) with Associate Athletics Director Brandi Stuart (left) and FSU Athletics Director Randy Spetman (right).

Higher Volleyball SuperCenter in Winter Haven, Fla. Also competing at the tournament will be the College of Charleston, Florida Gulf Coast, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Mercer and Tulane.

The Seminoles hosted their first home match on March 13 against Tulane at the Florida State Sand Volleyball Facility before traveling to Los Angeles for a USC-hosted event from March 16-18. Along with the Trojans, the Noles squared off against Pepperdine, Hawaii and Long Beach State.

A week later, Florida State welcomed USC, North Florida, Stetson and Florida Gulf Coast for its second home event from March 24-25.

Jacksonville is the site of FSU's next tournament a week later, as the Noles will compete in North Florida's event from March 31-April 1 along with Pepperdine, Jacksonville, UAB and the College of Charleston.

On April 6, FSU will compete at Stetson in a doubleheader matchup with the Hatters before competing at the Siesta Key Tournament from April 14-15.

The Seminoles will close out the regular season and home portions of their schedule on April 21 with back-to-back matches with UAB.

The inaugural collegiate sand volleyball season will come to a close at the USA Volleyball National Championships from April

27-29 in Gulf Shores, Ala.

There, FSU will look to become the first-ever collegiate national sand volleyball champion.

As an emerging NCAA sport, sand volleyball will need 40 teams to sponsor it for two years before the NCAA will sanction a national championship. Until that time the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) will sponsor a national championship event and award All-Americans.

Corso, who was hired as the nation's first full-time sand volleyball coach this summer, and her players made it known they will be chasing sand volleyball's first-ever national championship this spring.

"We have the goal of going to the national championships," captain Aurora Newgard said. "This has been a dream come true. Growing up, I've always loved Florida State. It's really exciting."

The team consists of nine full-time sand volleyball players and seven players who are also members of FSU's indoor volleyball team.

Newgard and Amanda Saxton have been named captains for the initial season, and Brittany Tiegs, Stephanie Pelliteri, Jeassica McGregor, Lacey Blackman, Melanie Pavels and Jace Pardon were all recruited to play for the sand team and are expected to make an immediate impact.





## THE TEAM - BREAKDOWN



## 2012 ROSTER

No.	Name	Height	Year	Hometown/Last School
1	Melanie Pavels	5'8"	Fr.	North Woodmere, N.Y./ Pace University (Pleasantville, N.Y.)
2	Aurora Newgard	5'9"	Jr.	Groveland, Fla./State College of Florida(Sarasota)
3	Jekaterina Stepanova	6'2"	Sr.	Riga, Latvia/ Missouri State-West Plains
4	Stephanie Pellitteri	5'8"	Fr.	Deerfield Beach, Fla./Pompano Beach
5	Amanda Saxton	6'0"	Jr.	Orlando, Fla./Lake Highland Prep
11	Caitlin Haworth	5'8"	GS	Boynton Beach, Fla./UNC at Pembroke
12	Visnja Djurdjevic	6'1"	Sr.	Zitise, Serbia/Zrenjaninska Gimnazija
13	Jeassica McGregor	5'8"	So.	Groveland, Fla./ Lake Sumter CC
14	Mallory Kiley	6'0"	Sr.	Palm Harbor, Fla./ ETSU
15	Brittany Tiegs	5'11"	So.	Stuart, Fla./Palm Beach State
20	Sarah Wickstrom*	5'11"	Fr.	Stuart, Fla./Jensen Beach HS
21	Jace Pardon	5'10"	Fr.	Manhattan Beach, Calif./ Mira Costa HS
22	Lacey Blackman	6'1"	Jr.	Ocala, Fla./ State College of Florida(Sarasota)
23	Fatma Yildirim	5'11"	Jr.	Istanbul, Turkey/Yuzuyl Isil
24	Marija Milosavljevic	6'4"	Jr.	Bajina Basta, Serbia/ Zrenjaninska Gimnazija
25	Nicole Walch	6'2"	Fr.	Stuart, Fla./Martin County HS

\* - Wickstrom is wearing No. 13 in the photo

**Head Coach:** Danalee Corso

**Assistant Coach:** Taylor Irvin

**Volunteer Assistant Coach:** Brian Corso

**Managers:** Blake Eaton and Isaac Kierstead



## HEAD COACH DANALEE CORSO



Experienced beach volleyball player and coach Danalee Corso has been selected to lead Florida State University's first-ever sand volleyball program as it begins play in the spring 2012.

Corso is well-known throughout the beach volleyball circuit after enjoying a highly successful professional career both domestically and internationally. Corso, a native of Honolulu, Hawaii, spent 13 seasons excelling in several professional tours, including the Women's Professional Volleyball Association, Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), USA Volleyball, Beach Volleyball America and The Association of Volleyball Professionals.

"I am both honored and excited to be the first head coach of sand volleyball at FSU," Corso said. "Sand volleyball is growing exponentially in the United States, with the largest amount of growth in Florida. Additionally, FSU is one of the most elite athletic programs in the nation and is stepping up with its support for sand volleyball by pioneering a full program.

"With sand volleyball being a new emergent sport for the NCAA, I wanted to be

a part of a university that believes in the sport's potential," Corso added. "FSU is setting itself up for success and I wanted to be part of that momentum. With the popularity of sand volleyball at the Olympics, around the world and at the junior level, I am certain it will be a great addition to the NCAA. I am also confident that sand volleyball's inclusion to the NCAA will help grow indoor volleyball by bringing new marketing opportunities and exposure, which is great news for women's sports in general."

In 2004, Corso received a Brazilian Pro Beach Coaching Accreditation and helped coach the United States National Beach Volleyball Team from 2004-07 with a specific focus on the tandem of Rachel Wacholder and Tyra Turner. She has also coached 2008 Summer Games Olympian Nicole Branagh as well as professionals Makare Wilson, Michelle More and Suzanne Stonebarger.

"I am excited to see such a well-rounded coach coming to create the Florida State sand volleyball program," former FSU volleyball star and worldwide renowned figure Gabrielle Reece said. "Danalee's commitment to the game and her own excellence is apparent in the amount of time she has dedicated to learning how to condition and coach athletes. Her understanding of the game and how to prepare her athletes to be as competitive as possible is going to be exciting to watch.

"I believe coach Corso, coach Poole and the Florida State Sand Volleyball program are going to set a wonderful precedent of what a beach volleyball program could and should look like at the collegiate level," Reece added.

Following her national team stint, Corso became owner of Aloha Ball Club - a full-service beach volleyball school that offers classes and private lessons for amateurs



and professionals as well as fitness training. She was also head coach of the Under-19 and Under-21 U.S. National Teams for men and women, and head coach of the World University Championship men's and women's teams. She most recently coached the Costa Rica Women's National Beach Team in 2009-10.

"Danalee is a great addition to the FSU staff," said USA Volleyball Beach High Performance and Development Programs Director Ali Wood-Lamberson. "Her experience both as a world ranked athlete and as the coach of several successful international teams makes her a valuable commodity in the beach volleyball community.

"USA Volleyball is delighted with FSU's commitment to the implementation and success of women's sand volleyball as an NCAA sport, and looks forward to supporting FSU and other NCAA sand programs in the years to come."

Some of Corso's greatest playing achievements include finishing as one of the top 10 teams in the competitive USA Volleyball Pro Tour from 1994-97. On the AVP-USA Pro Beach Volleyball Tour, Corso guided her squad to top-8 tour finishes from 1999-2002. In 1998, her team finished first on the Switzerland Pro Beach Tour.

As a professional, Corso won five different events that include the 1995 Motherlode Open in Aspen, Colo., an international tournament in Three Lakes, Switzerland, in 1998, the 1998 Switzerland FIVB Satellite Tournament in Jona and two Norceca Tournaments in both San Juan, Puerto Rico and Mexico City in 2003.

Corso is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University, where she played indoor from 1989-92. She captained the team and was a First Team All-West Coast Conference pick.

Corso and her husband Brian, who is also a sand volleyball enthusiast, have two young children, Camryn and Asher.





## SAND VOLLEYBALL STAFF

**ASSISTANT COACH  
BRIAN CORSO**



**Bio:** A former professional beach and indoor volleyball player, Brian is married to head coach Danalee Corso...Played collegiate indoor volleyball at San Diego State from 1995-1999 and was an assistant coach with the University of San Diego in 2002-03...Played on the AVP Tour and was head coach at L.A. College's women's volleyball team in 2009 in addition to his career has a personal fitness trainer since 2003...Also coached the Costa Rican junior national team from 2006-09 and was a USA junior national beach team coach during that same span.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT  
TAYLOR IRVIN**



**Bio:** Played club volleyball at Sports Performance Volleyball Club where she says she learned most of her coaching philosophy and technique...Was a four-year member of the South Alabama indoor volleyball team...Taylor was the President of the Student Athletic Advising Committee at South Alabama from 2008-2010...Made the Sunbelt Academic Honor Role at South Alabama...Also won the South Alabama Spirit Award...Coached club at Mobile Storm Volleyball in Mobile, Ala., from 2007-2010...Irvin is pursuing her master's degree in Sport Mangement at FSU.

**DIRECTOR OF VOLLEYBALL  
CHRIS POOLE**



**Bio:** As Florida State's Director of Volleyball, Seminoles' indoor volleyball head coach Chris Poole has been in charge of developing FSU's newest sport...Poole has been wildly successful at the helm of the FSU indoor volleyball program since coming to Florida State in 2008...He has led the Garnet & Gold indoor volleyball team to unprecedented heights, including the Seminoles' first-ever trip to the NCAA Final Four in 2011...FSU became the first ACC team ever to advance that far...Florida State earned its second ACC title in three years and finished with a 28-7 overall record and an 18-2 ACC mark in 2011...He has a 102-30 overall record with the Noles, including a 31-3 campaign in 2009.



## LAURYSSA BLACKMAN



**JUNIOR • 6-1 • OCALA, FL**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA**

**CLUB TEAM:  
GAINESVILLE JUNIORS**

**Volleyball Career:** An all-around athlete, who has played multiple sports such as indoor volleyball as well as basketball...A volleyball player for nine years, Lacey won a bid to the 2005 Sand Volleyball Junior Olympics as a 15-year old...Also was a Team Florida High Performance participant...In 2008, as a senior in high school, Lauryssa was awarded honorable mention on the Florida all-state team...She also was runner-up for the 2008 Marion County MVP award...As a freshman at the State College of Florida in 2009, she was named second-team All-Suncoast Conference... Captured first-team All-Suncoast Conference honors in 2010...Also earned FCCAA/NJCAA All-State accolades as she led her team to a Suncoast Conference title...Was a two-year starting middle blocker at SCF with experience at right side and outside hitter.

**Personal:** Majoring in communications... Was homeschooled for high school...Selected to the Dean's List at State College of Florida in 2011... Was a member of FCA...Daughter of David and Angie Blackman... Born on September 9, 1990.

## VISNJA DJURDJEVIC



**SENIOR • 6-1 • ZITISTE, SERBIA**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
TULANE**

**CLUB TEAM:  
KLEK CLUB VOLLEYBALL**

**Volleyball Career:** One of the stars of FSU's indoor volleyball team that advanced to the NCAA Final Four in 2011...Named AVCA Honorable Mention All-American - the third of her collegiate career... Was named to the All- ACC team in 2011...AVCA All-East Region - finishes her indoor volleyball career as a four-time all-region performer and is the third FSU volleyball player since 2000 to make all-region multiple times while playing for the Seminoles...Selected FSU Invitational and Minneapolis Region All-Tournament Team in 2011...Became the first FSU volleyball player to ever earn multiple All-America honors while playing for the Garnet and Gold, earning AVCA Honorable Mention All-America honors as a junior in 2010... Also captured AVCA Honorable Mention All-America honors in 2009 at Tulane...Ranked second on the FSU indoor squad in kills and digs this past season.

**Personal:** Born on Dec. 13, 1989, in Zrehjahn, Serbia...Majoring in social sciences...Can speak Serbian and English...Role model is NBA shooting guard Peja Stojakovic.





## CAITLIN HAWORTH



**GRADUATE STUDENT • 5-8  
• BOYNTON BEACH, FL**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
UNC AT PEMBROKE**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
PARK VISTA**

**Volleyball Career:** A great asset to the Seminoles with four years of college experience at UNC Pembroke, where she was a member of the Lady Braves' indoor volleyball squad...Appeared in 116 matches as an outside hitter...Was second on the team in digs with 359 during the 2009 season... During her senior season in 2010, Haworth played in 22 matches, recording 11 kills, eight aces and 150 kills as UNCP went 19-14...In high school, Haworth earned All-State Third Team and All-County First Team in 2007 at Park Vista High School in Boynton, Fla....She holds the school record for kills, digs and blocks for a career and was named the "Athlete of the Year" at her high school.

**Personal:** Working towards a master's degree in sports management... Favorite movie is "Gladiator"...Favorite TV show is True Blood...Favorite song is "Bless The Broken Road" by Rascal Flatts... Enjoys snorkeling, boating, fishing and anything outdoors...Has volunteered over 1,000 hours teaching volleyball to middle school students...Aunt Janet Haworth played tennis at FSU between 1973-1977...Has a "crazy love" for milk...Hopes to become a Division I coach... Born Aug. 21, 1989...Daughter of Sharon and Michael Haworth.

## MALLORY KILEY



**SENIOR • 6-0 • PALM HARBOR, FL**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE U.**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
PALM HARBOR UNIVERSITY H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
TAMPA UNITED**

**Volleyball Career:** Was a First Team all- conference and all- county selection her junior and senior year and also voted Team MVP at Palm Harbor University High school...Her club team, Tampa United, took second at Junior Nationals 17s...Transferred from East Tennessee State University where she played 31 of 32 matches as a freshman and started 22 of them....Had 152 kills and was third on team in blocks and second in the team in solo blocks while at ETSU.

**Personal:** Had a 3.95 GPA and earned All- Atlantic Sun academic honors at ETSU...Mallory's favorite TV shows are Family Guy and Grey's Anatomy....Oldest brother Jason played baseball for the Yankees organization and other older brother, Tim, currently plays for the White Sox organization.....Parents are Kevin and Coleen Kiley...Majoring in dietetics.



## JEASSICA MCGREGOR



**SOPHOMORE • 5-8 • GROVELAND, FL**  
**LAST COLLEGE:**  
**LAKE SUMTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**HIGH SCHOOL:**  
**SOUTH LAKE H.S.**  
**CLUB TEAM:**  
**ORLANDO VOLLEYBALL CLUB**

**Volleyball Career:** A valuable player to the Seminoles as a strong setter and defender... Excellent ball placement and accuracy...Competed for Lake Sumter Community College as a right side hitter and a setter in 2010-11, earning All-Mid-Florida Conference first team accolades as a member of the indoor volleyball squad... She led her team with 416 assists, 33 aces and a near 25 percent hitting efficiency...In the National Junior College Athletic Association final rankings, McGregor was 27th in aces per set and 48th in assists... Paired with current teammate, Aurora Newgard, to win the USA Volleyball National Beach Volleyball Junior Championships in 18-and-under age division in 2009...Has won over 75 beach volleyball tournaments and is undefeated in Florida juniors since 2006...Captured the USAV National Junior Beach Tour Championship in 2008...Grabbed a bronze medal at the High Performance Nationals...Earned a silver medal at the USA Junior National Tour Beach Volleyball 20-under division event in Huntington Beach, Calif., in 2009...Also played basketball and was named the indoor volleyball team MVP and captain in 2009 at South Lake High School.

**Personal:** Majoring in social science... Favorite movie is "Drop Dead Gorgeous"... Favorite athlete and role model is Misty May... Hopes to play beach volleyball professionally and also mentor young athletes...Born December 16, 1991...Parents are Geary and Becky McGregor.

## MARIJA MILOSAVLJEVIC



**JUNIOR • 6-4 • BAJINA BASTA, SERBIA**  
**LAST COLLEGE:**  
**TULANE**  
**HIGH SCHOOL:**  
**ZRENJANINSKA GIMNAZIJA**

**Volleyball Career:** Played middle blocker on the Florida State indoor volleyball team that advanced to the NCAA Final Four this fall...Named to the Conference USA All-Freshman Team while at Tulane in 2009...Finished second in Conference USA in hitting percentage at .354... Conference USA leader with a hitting mark of .396 during conference play...Helped the Youth National Team win a gold medal at the 2007 Balkan Championships, silver medals at the 2007 European Championships and 2007 European Youth Olympic Festival and a bronze medal at the 2005 Balkan Championships.

**Personal:** Born March 20, 1990 in Uzice, Serbia...Majoring in business... Favorite professional team is Partizan of the Serbian Basketball League... Professional athlete she'd like to meet is Roger Federer...Captained the Serbian National Team.





## AURORA NEWGARD



**JUNIOR • 5-8 • GROVELAND, FL**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
SOUTH LAKE H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
LAKE COUNTY JUNIOR**

**Volleyball Career:** Named a captain by head coach Danalee Corso... Appeared in the 2010 Dig The Beach Top 10 Women's Open Division... Took first-place in the Fiesta On Siesta Collegiate Beach Championship in 2010... Won the 2008 USA Beach Volleyball Tour Championship in Huntington Beach, Calif... Ranked first nationally in total kills State College of Florida in 2010-11 with 550... Received 2010-11 NJCAA All-America Honorable Mention honors... Named 2010-11 Suncoast Conference Player of the Year... Named to Suncoast Conference First Team... Named FCCAA Player of the Week... Named team captain for State College of Florida... Captured Lake County Player of the Year while in high school.

**Personal:** Majoring in social science... Plans to do mission work in other countries after graduating... Involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes... Favorite athlete is professional surfer Bethany Hamilton... Parents are Frank and Glenda Newgard.

## JACE PARDON



**FRESHMAN • 5-10  
• MANHATTAN BEACH, CA.**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
MIRA COSTA H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
CLUB TROY**

**Volleyball Career:** Has won various AAU, CBVA and USA tournaments... Teamed with Tiffany Morales to claim the USA Volleyball Youth Beach High Performance under-19 division championship in June, 2011... Advanced to the final round of the 2011 USA Beach Volleyball High Performance Championships... Nabbed gold in 18U division for the 2011 California Regional Championships and placed third at the 2010 AAU National Championships for the 18U Division... Named MVP at the Gahr Tournament... Won Manhattan Beach Open in 2011... Captured Hermosa Beach Open title in 2009... Finished in the top eight at the 2009 "Queen of the Beach."

**Personal:** Major is business... favorite movie is "Anchorman"... Favorite TV show is South Park... Favorite musician is Beyonce... Enjoys going to the beach, shopping, traveling and dancing... Has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity... Lettered in swimming in high school... Role models are Dwight Howard and LeBron James... Parents are Jeanne Dempsey and Michael Pardon... Born June 6, 1993... Sister, Sivan is a senior water polo player at Hawaii... Brother, CJ, competed in water polo at UC Irvine.



## MELANIE PAVELS



**FRESHMAN • 5-8**  
**• NORTH WOODMERE, NY**  
**PREVIOUS COLLEGE:**  
**PACE UNIVERSITY**  
**HIGH SCHOOL:**  
**VALLEY STREAM SOUTH H.S.**  
**CLUB TEAM:**  
**CLUB TROY**

**Volleyball Career:** An experienced athlete (volleyball player for 10 years, skier for 10 years and badminton for six), Melanie has a strong sports resume...An all-county volleyball selection from eighth grade through 12th grade at Valley Stream South High School... All-tournament selection all four years of her high school career...An all-state pick her junior year of high school, as well as a St. Anthony's Invitational MVP...As a senior, she became a member of the Silver Medal Long Island Scholastic Team at the Empire State Games...Snagged four first-place finishes at the East End Volleyball Tour in 2011... Has eight first-place finishes on the Women's Open Great American Volleyball Tour.

**Personal:** Major is food and nutrition science...An accomplished badminton player in high school, Melanie received All-Long Island Badminton Team recognition her senior year, as well as all-county and all-conference mentions her junior and senior years... Recipient of multiple academic awards including the PTSA Award, Valley Stream State of Commerce Award and was a member of multiple clubs including the National Honor Society...Her sister Hilary played indoor volleyball at Adelphi University and her father played indoor volleyball at UCSB and was on the AVP Tour for sand volleyball...Parents are Eric and Rhonda Pavels...Born May 14, 1993.

## STEPHANIE PELLITTERI



**FRESHMAN • 5-8**  
**• DEERFIELD BEACH, FL**  
**HIGH SCHOOL:**  
**POMPANO BEACH H.S.**  
**CLUB TEAM:**  
**OCEAN BREEZE VOLLEYBALL AND BEACH DIG**

**Volleyball Career:** Extremely talented defender ready to play at the college level...Was the first athlete ever to commit to a sand volleyball scholarship when she announced in February 2011 she would play for the Seminoles...Won 18U Dig the Beach Championship...Led Pompano Beach's indoor team to the Class 3A regional semifinals in 2010...Was captain of her high school team, while earning all-county honors...While playing for Club Beach Dig, Pellitteri has boasted some enormous victories over the years...Her team finished in first place in Women's AAA Florida Beach volleyball on April 2, and also won the 18-under Open Division East Coach Beach Nationals in Fort Lauderdale on Aug. 8, 2010...Other events where she has led her team to victory include the 18-under USAV Florida Regional Championship, 18-under USAV Southern Open and both the 18-under and Women's AAA Miami Beach Championships...Pellitteri also became a Junior 18-under Regional and National Dig the Beach champion...She has been invited to several camps at the sand volleyball Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif., which are invitation only.

**Personal:** Major is sports management... Favorite movie is "Elf"... Favorite athlete and role model is Misty May... April 13th was named "Stephanie Pellitteri Day" in her hometown... Enjoys the beach, photography and paddle boarding...Hopes to be playing pro beach volleyball in 10 years... Parents are Donna and Matt Pellitteri...Has two sisters, Nina and Brittany... Born October 24, 1992.





## AMANDA SAXTON



**JUNIOR • 6-0 • ORLANDO, FL.**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
LAKE HIGHLAND PREP**

**CLUB TEAM:  
ORLANDO VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY**

**Volleyball Career:** Named a captain by head coach Danalee Corso...Also a member of Florida State's indoor volleyball team, which advanced to the 2011 NCAA Final Four...Appeared in one match in 2011 and earned time in one match in 2010...During her high school career, won four consecutive 3A state championships for Lake Highland Prep in Orlando, Fla., and was a team captain her senior year...Played club for Orlando Volleyball Academy..Was named Orlando Sentinel Athlete of the Week in 2007.

**Personal:** Majoring in communications with a business and English minor and carries a 3.97 cumulative grade point average...Captured the prestigious NCAA Elite 89 Award in December at the NCAA Volleyball Final Four in San Antonio, Texas...The award is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA Championships...Was one of the ACC Top Six Service Award winners for her generous time commitment in FSU's community service program...Daughter of Brad and Denise Saxton...Favorite movie is "Rudy"...Likes listening to "With Everything" by Hillsong...Has two younger brothers ...Traveled to Guatemala on a mission trip with the Wesley Foundation Campus Ministry...Born June 19, 1991.

## JEKATERINA STEPANOVA



**SENIOR • 6-2 • RIGA, LATVIA**

**LAST COLLEGE:  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY -  
WEST PLAINS**

**Volleyball Career:** Athletically-gifted outside hitter who has shown moments of offensive brilliance... A two-year starter on the FSU indoor volleyball team which went to the NCAA Final Four this fall... Led the team this season in kills and ranked third in digs... AVCA Second Team All-American - making her the second Seminole to ever earn non-honorable mention All-America honors...Named to the All-ACC Team...Won the FSU Invitational Tournament MVP...Received ACC Co-Player of the week (Nov. 21)...Two-time AVSR Player of the Week (Aug. 29, Dec. 5)... AVSR Global Player of the Year...Claimed the Minneapolis Region All-Tournament Team MVP.

**Personal:** Born March 19, 1989...Majoring in international studies...Swam in high school...Can speak Russian, English and Latvian...Athlete she'd most like to meet is Alexander Ovechkin...Looks up to her mother the most...Favorite quote is by Muhammad Ali, which says, "I hated every minute of training, but I said don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion."



## BRITTANY TIEGS



**SOPHOMORE • 5-9 • STUART, FL**

**PREVIOUS COLLEGE:  
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
JENSEN BEACH H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
TRESURE COAST**

**Volleyball Career:** A great asset to the Seminoles with a year of indoor volleyball college experience at Palm Beach State College, where she tallied 152 kills, including a team-high 3.9 per set...Also had 25 blocks, 100 digs and 17 aces for PBSC in 2010-11...Was named to the All-Southern Conference and junior college All-State First Teams...Set a school record with 352 kills during her senior season helping lead Jensen Beach High School to the 2010 state championship in indoor volleyball...Also won the 2008 state championship and was named Team MVP.

**Personal:** Majoring in biology... Enjoys reading, fishing and snorkeling... Was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes in high school... Aunt and uncle attended and taught at Florida State...Aspires to have a career in the medical field... Favorite athletes are Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh...Born September 30, 1991...Parents are Marlene Tiegs and Del Tiegs.

## NICOLE WALCH



**FRESHMAN • 6-2 • STUART, FL**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
MARTIN COUNTY H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
ORLANDO VOLLEYBALL ACADEMY**

**Volleyball Career:** Part of FSU's star-studded 2012 indoor volleyball signing class, but enrolled in January...Is expected to redshirt this sand volleyball season...A finalist for PrepVolleyball.com's national player of the year award and a second-team All-American by MaxPrep...Captured AVCA honorable mention All-America honors...Had 623 kills in 96 sets her senior year at Martin County High School to lead the Tigers to the Florida 7A state title...Was named state finals MVP honors and also led high school squad with 256 digs, while adding 45 aces and 40 blocks...Led entire state of Florida in kills her junior year...Ranked No. 53 in PrepVolleyball.com's senior class rankings...Was named the 7A Florida State Player of the Year.

**Personal:** Sister is FSU indoor volleyball sophomore Elise Walch...Favorite movie is "Something Borrowed"...Enjoys "Law & Order: SVU"...Sports idols growing up were Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh...Plans to major in sport management...Born Nov. 5, 1993.



## SARAH WICKSTROM



**FRESHMAN • 5-11 • STUART, FL.**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
JENSEN BEACH H.S.**

**CLUB TEAM:  
TREASURE COAST**

**Volleyball Career:** An extremely talented setter, Sarah was a member of the FSU indoor volleyball team that advanced to the NCAA Final Four in the fall...Named to the All-ACC Freshman team this past fall... Ranked second on the team in assists this season...Named a finalist for the Andi Collins Award in high school, which recognizes the best setter in the nation at the prep level while at Jensen Beach high school...Guided Jensen Beach to two state titles in her freshman and junior seasons and two state regional final appearances as a sophomore and senior...Florida Dairy Farmers 4A Player of the Year in 2009...Earned first-team all-state honors in 2009 and a nomination for the Gatorade Player of the Year.

**Personal:** Born April 5, 1993...Majoring in sport management...Roots for the Miami Dolphins and Miami Heat...Has traveled to Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and the Bahamas...Person she'd most like to meet in sports is Misty May...Her proudest moments in sports were winning two state championships in high school.

## FATMA YILDIRIM



**JUNIOR • 5-11 • ISTANBUL, TURKEY**

**HIGH SCHOOL:  
YUKYIL, ISIL**

**CLUB TEAM:  
ECZACIBASI**

**Volleyball Career:** Multi-talented player with a fierce attacking game... One of the hardest hitting attackers in the ACC...Played on the Florida State indoor volleyball team which went to the NCAA Final Four this fall... Named to the ACC All-Freshman Team in 2009...Led the Yuzyil Isil High School team to the title at the 2006 and 2007 Turkish Volleyball Championship...Eczacibasi Youth team won the Turkish Championship all four years she was a member (2006-2008).

**Personal:** Born March 1, 1990...Majoring in dietetics...Played badminton, basketball, swimming and tennis in high school...Can speak Turkish, English, and German...Grew up with two birds, two tortoises, a chick, a rabbit and a goldfish...Wears No. 7 because she believes it is lucky... Biggest role model is her mother... Favorite quote is "When it gets hard, you know you are on the right path."

# FSU BEACH VOLLEYBALL LEGEND GABRIELLE REECE

Gabrielle Reece was a star on the Florida State indoor volleyball team from 1987-1990 before becoming one of the country's most famous celebrities in the 1990s as a model, actress and professional beach volleyball player.

**TimeOut**  
New York

The complete weekly guide  
January 17-24, 1996 Issue No. 17

Flame on  
Cozy corners in  
fireside dining

The two-way street  
Bisexuality comes on

Holy Kryptonite  
Clash of the comic  
book superheroes

**MOVE YOUR BUTT**  
GABRIELLE REECE TELLS HOW SHE STAYS HARD-BODIED

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**WORKOUT**  
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**BIG GIRL IN THE MIDDLE**

Gabrielle Reece  
& Karen Karbo

*"I believe Coach Corso, Coach Poole and the Florida State Sand Volleyball program are going to set a wonderful precedent of what a sand volleyball program could and should look like at the collegiate level." - Gabrielle Reece*

**Q & A WITH CAPTAIN AURORA NEUGARD*****How did you get started playing volleyball?***

Growing up, my parents always played, I had two courts in my backyard, so they would play “backyard volleyball”, but I never really played with them. My sixth grade year, indoor volleyball started, and my friend and I were going to do that. I came home and was like, “Mom, I want to do volleyball, I want to try out for the volleyball team,” and she said, “Okay, I wish you would have told me sooner so we could have practiced!” Right away, she started working with me, and come tryout time, I ended up making the team. Right before my ninth grade year, Jeass (McGregor) and I started playing in (beach) tournaments, and we’ve been playing ever since.

***How did you find out about coming to Florida State to play sand volleyball?***

In high school, I was really close to my family, so I never pictured moving away. My senior year of high school, I was playing beach volleyball, and I met the assistant coach for State College of Florida, and played against him, and actually beat him. He recruited me to be on the team. We talked it over, and prayed about it, and finally I decided that I’d go and play there. Our first season didn’t go so well, we ended at 7-35, but I really loved the coach and the team and it was a good experience. The second year, we got a new coach, and it was a completely opposite season. We ended up 35-7, which is awesome, and we went to states. It was amazing. I started talking to Coach Poole, and he recruited me to be on (Florida State’s) team.

***Can you talk about being reunited with Jeassica?***

All throughout high school, we were on the same team, we were beach partners for five or six years. I was a year ahead of her in school, so I went to State College of Florida, and she went to Lake Sumter. State College of Florida is where I met Lacey, and I had a blast playing with her, and we were actually roommates for my last year there, and we lived near each other the first year. Coming here and playing with her, and Jeassica being on the same team, is so cool to already know people and to already have friends.



*Junior Aurora Newgard was named a captain this season by head coach Danalee Coroso. A veteran beach volleyball player, Newgard is expected to lead FSU in the inaugural season.*

***What are you majoring in at FSU?***

Right now, I’m in social science, but I’m in the process of changing over to social science education. I want to be a teacher, and coach volleyball, and maybe even do teaching in another country.

***What are some of your favorite things about Florida State and Tallahassee?***

I love being an athlete here, we get treated amazing. I just love being a Seminole. I’ve always been a Florida State fan, and to actually be a Seminole is awesome. We have great facilities, great coaches and I love my teammates.

***Are there any hobbies you have outside of volleyball?***

I like to surf and pretty much anything extreme like that. I like cliff jumping, long boarding. I have three brothers, so I grew up doing all kinds of stuff like that.

***Who is your partner on the team? What are her strengths?***

Brittany Tiegs. Brittany is an awesome player. I knew her before coming here, I played against her a lot, and she is strong at everything, and a very strong hitter. We just did the body weight power assessment, and she got the highest. She has a powerful hit, her defense is amazing and a really strong jump serve, so she’s all around an awesome player. We connect well, and I think we have good chemistry on the court.

***What’s your favorite part about playing sand volleyball?***

The competitiveness. It’s like a team sport, but it kind of isn’t. There’s only two people on the court, so the game is on you, since you’re touching the ball on every play.

***What’s your favorite TV show? “Psych.”******What’s your favorite movie? “Lord of the Rings” or “Star Wars.”***



## SAXTON: A TRUE STUDENT ATHLETE

By FSU Sports Information intern Adam Shrigley

Spirit and dedication have been a staple point for Florida State athletics for decades. As the university welcomes a new sport to its family, there seems to be no better choice than junior captain Amanda Saxton to represent the sand volleyball program. Quick to point out there's no "I" in team, the Orlando native instills hard work, dependability and faith in her teammates and those around her. With a new facility in place, the lady Seminoles are preparing to hit the sand when the season kicks off this spring.

Splitting time between the sand and indoor volleyball teams allows for a unique opportunity to lead Saxton's teammates to what promises to be a successful first year.

"It's so great to see everyone coming together as a team and focusing on setting the bar high from the start. I love this group of girls and want to be able to serve them in a leadership role in any way possible," Saxton said.

Stepping up and lending a helping hand is nothing new to Saxton, who is very involved in community service initiatives, volunteering and giving back to others. Whether its weekend mission trips or visiting local schools, she is always finding ways to strengthen and guide others.

"Having the ability to speak to younger kids and influence them is special. Being a role model and being able to give back and inspire is something I value and really enjoy doing," she added.

While her dedication and commitment off campus is unquestioned, it mirrors her outlook in the classroom and on the court, setting a tremendous example of how to balance academics and athletics. Recipient of the Golden Torch award, Saxton was recognized as one of the university's top student-athletes recently. Boasting a 4.0 cumulative GPA while double-majoring in communications and business is an indication of her impact in the



Saxton, a member of FSU's sand and indoor volleyball teams, will serve as a captain on the sand squad in 2012.



Saxton was awarded the NCAA Elite 89 Award at the NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Championships in December. The Elite 89 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's championships.

classroom and on the court.

In the spring, Saxton was also honored at the Golden Nole Banquet for her willingness in the community after being named one of the ACC Top Six Service Award winners. Humbled by the achievement, her family, friends and teammates are who she credits.

"It was an honor to receive the award. I wouldn't be able to accomplish these things without the resources made available to me. It motivates me to be an asset and role model, without my teammates there to push me and support me it wouldn't be possible."

Balancing her schedule can sometimes be a challenge while also serving as a walk-on for the nationally ranked indoor team. Using her mornings to play on the sand and afternoons practicing and training with the indoor team, getting used to the differences of the two is still a learning process but she is looking forward to the challenge.

"The strategy is the biggest difference. Having two players instead of six changes the way you play the game and move around. I'm still relatively new to the sport but love that I have the opportunity to play on both teams with such amazing teammates."

Sand volleyball head coach Danalee Corso will bring in some needed experience to the first-year program and seems to already be making an impression on the team. A former professional beach volleyball player herself, Corso will take over this spring and knows what she's looking for in her captain.

"Amanda is amazing, not only is she a 4.0 student, but she's now playing two different sports and I'm not sure how many athletes could do that. She received the ACC community service award and I am so happy to see her doing well in sand volleyball," Corso said. "She was an easy choice as a captain for me because she has the qualities of a leader and a role model for the team. I think she is a master of time management and we can all learn from her."

"I have never met a person that focused, meanwhile having an incredible disposition. She'll never complain and is never negative on anything, feels blessed to have an opportunity on both teams and the team can learn a lot from her as well as all of us."

As the season inches closer, Corso will continue to push the team and stay on top of the girls, something that Saxton says will pay off.

Over the summer, Saxton furthered her education by studying abroad.

"Coach Corso is tough and will get on you but she makes us all want to do better. Learning a new sport, I want someone that's on me all the time so if I'm doing something wrong she can correct me. It's a great player-coach relationship, she's been outstanding so far in helping all the girls and making sure this program gets started off on the right foot."

Fourth-year indoor volleyball head coach Chris Poole can certainly agree with Corso when talking about Saxton's wonderful traits. What Poole sees in Saxton is a tireless worker who shows an enormous amount of dedication toward the program that is unmatched. She brings an enormous smile each and every day to practice and brings an attitude that can never be taught.

"Amanda has a huge heart for playing FSU Volleyball," Poole said proudly. "You can tell she comes out excited to practice and help the team in any way. It doesn't matter what we are doing, whether it's a drill in practice or community service, she does things with an incredible amount of enthusiasm and loves to be a part of our program."

As a true role model for others, Amanda Saxton embodies everything that is right about intercollegiate athletics. Her spirit deep, dedication unmatched and love for the game and those around her are immense, as Saxton defines the term student-athlete and everything the colors garnet and gold represent.

**NATION'S FIRST-EVER SAND VOLLEYBALL WIN**

History was made by the Florida State sand volleyball team on Saturday, March 3, as the Seminoles won the nation's first ever collegiate sand volleyball match at UAB in Birmingham, Ala.

Florida State swept the Blazers, 5-0, only losing one set in the No. 4 matchup.

"We made history today," Florida State head coach Danalee Corso said. "We won the first ever collegiate sand volleyball match. It was awesome. It was great to share it with our team. Everyone felt it. It's something we can look back on and be proud of."

Five dual matches and three exhibitions were played at UAB's newly completed sand volleyball facility located next to West Campus Field in Birmingham.

FSU's No. 1 team of Brittany Tieg and Aurora Newgard defeated Heather Thomas and Kisten Gallagher, 21-10, 21-12. Tieg had 13 kills and

Newgard recorded a double-double with 10 kills and 14 digs.

The No. 2 tandem of Kate Stepanova (13 kills) and Jace Pardon (14 kills) downed Sarah Secley and Alison Woods, 21-16, 21-18.

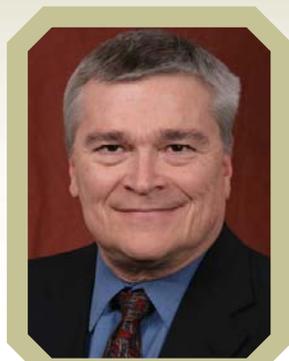
FSU's No. 3 pair of Visnja Djurdjevic and Melanie Pavels handled Kate Morrell and Ally Slaughter, 21-15, 21-11. Pavels had 10 kills and 14 digs.

The Garnet & Gold's No. 5 squad of Jeassica McGregor and Sarah Wickstrom dispatched Michele Simmons and Becca Howard, 21-15, 21-14, behind McGregor's 12 digs.

The only match that was close for the Noles was the No. 4 matchup between Mallory Kiley and Stephanie Pellitteri of FSU and Rachel Fairbanks and Kiriavia Hirini of UAB. Kiley and Pellitteri edged the Blazer pair in three sets, 21-14, 9-21, 17-15. Kiley had 17 kills.



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## MEDIA INFORMATION

### A NOTE TO THE MEDIA, FANS AND OPPONENTS

Florida State assistant sports information director Zach Stipe is ready to assist you with any questions or requests you may have about Florida State's inaugural sand volleyball program, almanac, coaches and student-athletes. Please do not hesitate to contact the FSU Sports Information office if we can further assist you.

### PLAYERS & COACHES INTERVIEWS

All players and coaches interviews should be arranged through the sports information office by contacting Zach Stipe at (850) 645-7683 or by e-mail (zstipe@fsu.edu) at least 24 hours in advance. Student-athlete's phone numbers will not be released. Media may not contact any student-athlete through the use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter.

### HOME EVENTS

All of the 2012 sand volleyball matches are located at the Seminole Sand Volleyball Complex, which is located north of the soccer and softball complex and between the track and field complex and the parking garage on Spirit Way. All media and photographers should notify Zach Stipe prior to attending a home sand volleyball match.

### FSU ON THE WEB

All the game stories, updated stats and sand volleyball news you could ever ask for is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at Seminoles.com. The official FSU athletics Web site is your first stop for all news on the Seminoles.

### FOLLOW FSU SAND VOLLEYBALL ON TWITTER

Media and fans are encouraged to follow @FSU\_SVB on the team's official Twitter page for instantaneous information surrounding the squad.



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## 2012 SCHEDULE

### FEBRUARY

**26 Garnet & Gold Match Tallahassee, Fla. 12:00pm**

### MARCH

**3 at UAB Birmingham, Ala. TBA**

**5 at Tulane New Orleans, La. TBA**

**8-9 Clash of the Collegians Winterhaven, Fla. All Day**

**13 vs. Tulane Tallahassee, Fla. 4:00pm**

**16-18 USC Tournament Los Angeles, Calif. All Day**

**24-25 FSU Tournament Tallahassee, Fla. All Day**

**29 vs. Hawai'i Tallahassee, Fla. 4:00pm**

**31-1 UNF Tournament Jacksonville, Fla. All Day**

### APRIL

**6 at Stetson Deland, Fla. TBA**

**14 Siesta Key Tournament Siesta Key, Fla. All Day**

**21 vs. UAB Tallahassee, Fla. 12:00pm**

**27-29 AVCA National Championships Gulf Shores, Ala. All Day**

*Double headers to be played 30 minutes after first match.  
All home matches played at Sand Volleyball courts next to Mike Long Track.*

