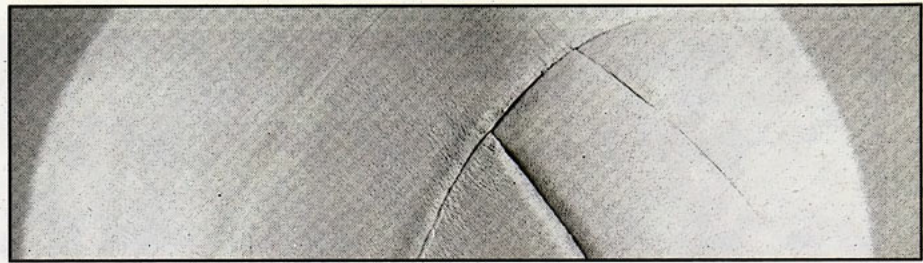


THREE-PEAT! Concordia University volleyball, national champions once again!



By Stephen Lybeck

Saint Paul, MN-The Gangelhoff Center was packed to capacity by a crowd roaring with energy. Fans fought for a view of the Concordia volleyball team in their quest to achieve the unthinkable—a third straight National Championship!

The tournament kicked off with Concordia's defeat of the University of Indianapolis in the NCAA quarterfinal on December 4th, 2009. The following day the Golden Bears defeated the #2 ranked Cal State San Bernardino in the championship semifinal. Finally the Golden Bears defeated the Lady Buffs of West Texas A&M 3-0 on Saturday December 5th, 2009, to become the NCAA Division II champions once again.

In the championship match on December 5th, 2009 both teams started off hesitant at first. The tension was visible as the significance of the match suddenly became a realization to the twelve women on the court. After a few dives and spikes, Concordia started to get going. Texas responded with strong play, but the hard fought first set went to the Golden Bears.

The defense for Concordia—like always—was outstanding! “Tonight they played composed; we let our defense do the talking for us,” said Coach Starkey. The Lady Buffs played exceptional on defense as well, but every long rally or hard fought point seemed to always go in the Bears favor.

The head coach for Texas, Jason Skroch said, “The reason why Concordia is good is they just make less errors.” After taking the first set 25-18, the Bears didn't let off the throttle. Concordia went on to take the second set in identical fashion (25-18).

With the team up 2-0 behind then energy of the home crowd, it just felt like there was no way Concordia would lose. Separating themselves 21-9 in the third set, Concordia could smell the victory.

The Lady Buffs battled back late, but junior Emily Palkert ended their late rally with the championship kill. The team celebrated with one another for a few seconds before being cloaked by diehards from the stands. Shortly after, Emily said “This is incredible! It hasn't even sunk in yet.” “It's indescribable,” said senior Sadie Kessler. Coach Starkey said, “They are unreal. They played so hard every night no matter what team they played. That's all you can ask for as a coach.” With a ridiculous win streak of 74 straight games, what else is there to discuss.

“We just stuck to our game,” said Junior Megan Carlson. Transfer-



The team right after they won their final game to conquer their third National Championship.

ring from Marshall University, Carlson has proved to

be a tremendous addition to the squad this year; she was named to the NCAA Championship All-Tournament Team as well as Cassie

Haag, Emily Palkert, and seniors Mary Slinger and Maggie McNamara.

Concordia has solidified their existence as a dynasty in NCAA division II volleyball. At the pre-tournament press conference, McNamara said, “When we're on, there is no stopping us.” That certainly proved to be the case.

Now that the season is through the Golden Bear volleyball team will have to say goodbye to valuable seniors: Mary Slinger, Maggie McNamara, and Sadie Kessler.

Congratulations to the team on their outstanding effort!

