

## The Victories of Volleyball

BY DEANNA HOLMES

**BUMP, SET, SPIKE!** Who knew that such a setup could lead to such a remarkable victory? Our Golden Bear volleyball team remained undefeated as they claimed a four-set win during game one against the Lewis Flyers and a five-set win during game two against the Western Washington Vikings at the Colorado Premiere Challenge.

During the match, the Golden Bears saw the Flyers claim the opening set, but they used that as fuel to keep their heads in the game. They responded in victory. The next three sets resulted in five wins in a row to start the season. Our Golden Bears continued to collect kills at lightning speed, as they finished the match with 67 kills and a .288 hitting percentage after collecting 19 kills in each of the final two sets of the competition. CSP brought the heat with their defense, limiting the Flyers to only 41 kills and a hitting mark of .176 in their loss.

The Golden Bears shined like stars on the court! And they did not come to play, I mean they did, but they also came to win! They advanced with digs (65-51) served aces (7-4) and blocks (7-6).

It really is true when you hear “teamwork makes the dream work!” Earning the title of NSIC Player of the Week honors, the dynamic duo of Jasmine Mulvihill and Teagan Starkey both played a tremendous part in

the victories for the Bears. To start the season, Mulvihill tallied 22 kills to accompany seven digs and three blocks while Starkey added 18 digs and 55 assists in the win. Ellie Sieling filled the stat sheet with 16 digs and nine assists. Emma Schmidt added 12 digs, nine kills, three blocks, and two aces. Sophia Andersen and Kennedy Brady joined Mulvihill in doubling the heat as Andersen hit .323 with 14 kills and Brady hit .350 with 11 kills.

Andrea Zeiser led the Flyers with 11 digs. It could have been anyone’s game in the first match. Lewis jumped out to a 5-3 lead in set two before Concordia



Photo Credit: Josh Deer

shifted with a 4-0 run. The score became even at 8-8, then the Golden Bears sent it out of reach with 9 of the next 10 points, which set the bar for the rest of the match. CSP was ready to cruise through the rest of the game in comfort with seven of the first 10 points before reaching six with 15-9. A 5-0 streak gave the Flyers the lead at 19-18 with a mindset to finish what had been started. The Golden Bears forced a set point at 24-22 before Lewis University forced one of their own with three consecutive points. It wasn’t until a breath of energy and momentum filled the vitality of Schmidt and Mulvihill sealing the deal with a 29-27 victory.

Concordia came out on top. They held an advantage in almost every category as their 71-49 edge in kills, followed by a .235-.152 hitting advantage, and a 67-58 edge in digs made all the difference on this night. There was impeccable teamwork and effort put in by the whole team.

The Golden Bears are currently sitting at 10-2 overall, with several more games on the schedule. This talented team will continue to prove that they are a force to be reckoned with as the season continues. Up next, the Bears will take on more conference teams and hope to improve their NSIC record, which currently sits at 3-1.

## From CSP to the Major Leagues: Louie Varland’s Debut

BY OLIVIA LAUBE



**SEPTEMBER 7TH WAS** an exciting day for CSP sports fans as former student Louie Varland made his major league debut with the Minnesota Twins. Varland was a pitcher at Concordia for the 2017-2019 seasons. Since his freshman year as a Golden Bear, he has improved his fastball by 15mph, worked his way up through the minors, and has become the Number 10 prospect in the Minnesota Twins system. And now, Varland is the first Concordia graduate to make it all the way to the major league.

Varland was selected by the Minnesota Twins with the 12th pick in the 15th round of the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft in 2019. His professional debut was with the Elizabethton Twins, a rookie level team, that same year. In 2020, Varland did not play for any team because the season was canceled due to the pandemic. But in 2021, he returned to play for the Fort Myers Mighty Missels (A) and the Cedar Rapids Kernels (A+). Then, in 2022, Varland really worked his way up through the minor leagues. He pitched for the Wichita Wind Surge (AA) and then the St. Paul Saints (AAA). In September, Varland finally had the chance to pitch for the Minnesota Twins.

In the September 7th game against the New York Yankees, Varland pitched 5 1/3 innings. He allowed two runs on three hits, and struck out seven. He retired the first eight batters he faced. Then, he allowed a double to Oswald Peraza. In the fourth inning, Aaron Judge, who Varland had struck out earlier, hit his 55th

home run of the season. This moment was Varland’s only blemish in the game. But, because the Yankees had a 3-1 lead, the Twins coach did not want to risk Varland facing Judge a third time. Griffin Jax entered the game to take his place on the mound. The Twins ended up losing the game 5-4, but that did not spoil the excitement of Varland’s debut.

Louie Varland has spent the last few years working extremely hard on his pitching, and that work shows. Varland accomplished his dream of playing in the major league. He was told after the game that he was getting sent back to the St. Paul Saints, but that is not expected to be for long. Varland played a great game with the Twins, and many people are looking forward

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**Varland accomplished his dream of playing in the major league.**

to seeing where he goes in his career. Varland had twenty three members of his family come to cheer him on during the Twins game, but they are not the only ones cheering him on. The CSP community is very proud of their former student.

News of his debut spread throughout campus, and that excitement was contagious. CSP has never had an athlete play Major League baseball. Louie Varland was able to make it there, and because of that, his hard work and accomplishments serve as inspiration for many others at Concordia.