

Volleyball's Student-Athletes Excel In The Classroom

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The El Camino College volleyball team has once again proved to be contender for a state championship this season, but that is not where the excellence ends.

Sophomores Zoe Pantera, Lauren and Kaitlyn Edwards, Erika Wilvang, and Karly Siverts were recently named 2011 Scholar Ballers for their excellent performance in the classroom. They will



be honored along with Scholar Ballers from the men's and women's water polo and cross country teams on Nov. 10 in the El Camino College South Gym before the Warriors take on L.A. Trade Tech in the final volleyball match of the regular season.

The Scholar Baller program was founded by a group of professors and academic administrators and is intended to inspire students in the middle school, high school, and college level to develop leadership skills and to excel in their education by using their interest in sports as motivation. The program is supported by the NCAA and has collaborates with more than 50 colleges and universities. In order to be recognized as a Scholar Baller, a student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 at El Camino College.

"It feels really good (to be a Scholar Baller) and I'm proud of myself," Pantera said. "I am taking some hard classes, so it's a great achievement."

Pantera has had a solid year on the court for the Warriors, but she is also working hard in the classroom. The environmental sciences major has a 3.6 grade point average this semester and has some high expectations when her time at El Camino College comes to an end.

The 5-foot-4 libero is looking at UCLA, UC Berkeley or the University of Washington as possible transfer destinations after she completes her sophomore year.



Along with volleyball and her studies, Pantera also juggles a job at a local restaurant, making it all the more vital to manage her spare time accordingly.

"I really deal with the struggles of studying, but whatever break I have I'm usually in the library," Pantera said.

Pantera is not the lone bookworm on the team, as four of her teammates also earned Scholar Baller honors.

"It's super cool," Pantera said. "This team is already great and to be recognized for getting high grades is always a bonus."

The Warriors frontline is also well represented, led by the Edwards sisters, Lauren and Kaitlyn. “It’s a really nice accomplishment,” Kaitlyn said. “We’ve been talking about it ever since freshman year and it’s something we really wanted to do.”

The sisters both major in kinesiology and have grade point averages hovering around 3.3. They acknowledge how hectic things can get when juggling academic and athletic success.

“It’s hard at times, but you just have to work through it if you want to play volleyball,” Lauren said.

There is also an added bonus to having teammates and relatives around who do well academically.

“It’s nice to have teammates you can study with,” Kaitlyn said. “Plus I have Lauren to study with as well so it’s nice to have other people there to help you out.”

Wilvang and Siverts round out the volleyball team’s resident “whiz kids.” Wilvang is a business major and has kept up a 3.39 GPA, but her goal is to get that even higher before her sophomore year is through.

Her favorite class is Business 1A where she has learned more about accounting. It’s also a subject she genuinely has enjoyed.

“It’s just interesting,” Wilvang said. “I like the mathematical aspects (of the class).”

She also echoed her teammates responses to time management, and summarized the key to succeeding in the classroom very efficiently: “As long as you maintain your focus it can be done,” she said.

Siverts is also a kinesiology major and plans to transfer to a university after her sophomore year. Her favorite class is her kinesiology class taught by men’s volleyball coach Richard Blount.

“The class is good,” Siverts said. “He makes it interesting.”

Siverts wants to be a physical therapist after she earns her degree. She also added that time management can get difficult, but that having a balance is crucial in order to succeed.

“You have to do some work before practice and some after practice,” Siverts said. “But you have to have a balance. Of course (it gets frustrating) because my science classes are really hard, but you just have to get a tutor and take it from there.”

Lastly, the key to successes in the classroom can be attributed to one ultimate goal; to do well both on and off the court. Academic success is always stressed by volleyball coach Le Valley Pattison.

“She always pushes us to do our best, both on the court and in the classroom,” Lauren Edwards said.

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