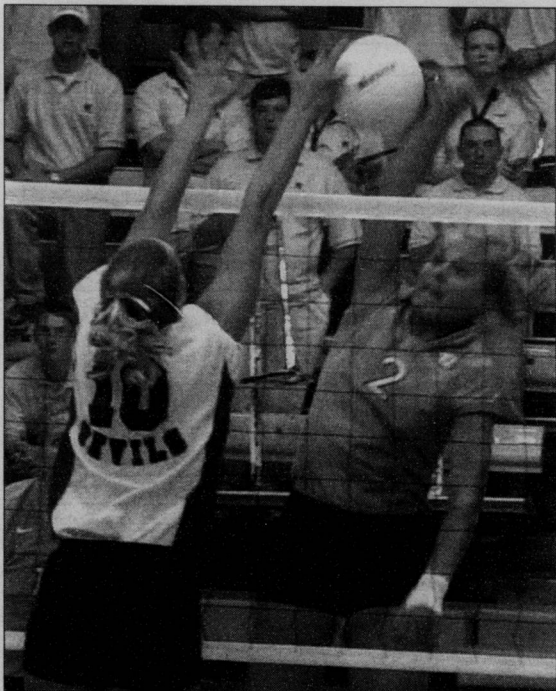


# Buchholz Breaks From Hockey Tradition



DTHRIVAN VASANI

Junior middle hitter Krista Buchholz has registered 94 blocks — second in the ACC — for the North Carolina women's volleyball team this season.

By ADAM D. HILL  
STAFF WRITER

Krista Buchholz comes from a family steeped in hockey tradition. Settled in the small town of Waupun, Wis., the Buchholz family sent each of its three sons to play in Madison, where the game is revered.

Across town, one of Buchholz's female cousins made the same short journey to lace up skates for Wisconsin — it just seemed natural that if you were a Buchholz athlete you played hockey for the Badgers.

But Krista knew she wasn't going to follow the well-worn path of playing hockey at Wisconsin, and she knew it at an early age.

"My varsity coach picked me out of my sixth grade class and worked with me individually," said Buchholz, now a middle hitter on the North Carolina volleyball team. "I've always known I wanted to play volleyball and play at the collegiate level.

"I'm the black sheep of the family." To make that transition from playing club volleyball in high school to playing at UNC, Buchholz had to make an exclusive commitment to volleyball.

"During my sophomore year my coach asked me how far I wanted to go with volleyball," Buchholz said. "He said I had the potential, but getting recruited from a small town like mine is hard, and the work I had to do

was going to be tough."

She did the work, and the now-communications major landed in Chapel Hill, a distant and unfamiliar town.

No one from the tightly-knit Buchholz family had ever ventured so far from Waupun, especially to play volleyball.

"The transition was very hard," Buchholz said. "During the first semester I was the most homesick person in the world, but I made up my mind that this is where I wanted to go to school, and this is where I want to play volleyball."

The academic aspect of UNC came quickly for Buchholz, but playing time on the team did not.

Playing behind Shannon Smith, one of the best Tar Heel players ever, the 6-foot-1 Buchholz saw little action during her freshman and sophomore years. The time on the bench, however, didn't discourage Buchholz. Instead, it actually helped her.

"My teammates were very reassuring," Buchholz said. "It was nice to know that there were 12 people around me who had gone through the same thing, and I needed that transition time to work on my game."

Buchholz tallied 68 kills in her sophomore year, a dramatic improvement from the 11 she posted her freshman season.

With a secure position in hand this year, Buchholz has emerged as the team's top blocker and one of the

ACC's best.

The junior currently has 94 blocks, posting 1.24 per game, which ranks second in the competitive ACC.

Her success doesn't come easily, however.

"I have a constant battle with my body every practice," Buchholz said. "You can never take it easy out there."

Not that she would. UNC coach Joe Sagula cites Buchholz's work ethic as exemplary. From that hard work, Buchholz has helped to fill the voids in the UNC defense and created a positive atmosphere.

"She works really hard in practice and shows great work ethic," teammate Laura Greene said. "She has a tough job, but she is always there to do it, and do it positively."

# Tomecka Gives UNC 'Big' Advantage

By KELLY LUSK  
STAFF WRITER

Freshman Maggie Tomecka is a big player on the North Carolina women's soccer team.

She's big in every sense of the word. Tomecka, a defensive midfielder, is a brick wall in the UNC defense and usually towers above most of the other players on the field.

At 5-foot-10, Tomecka is the tallest Tar Heel on the squad. UNC coach Anson Dorrance credited two goals during the Tar Heels' ACC tournament win to Tomecka's size.

She scored from close range in the semifinals against Florida State and was also centered in the box when she assisted a Meredith Florance goal versus N.C. State in the quarterfinals.

"When you put her in front of the (opposing) goalkeeper, she blots out the sun," Dorrance said.

She played center and power forward for her high school basketball team and looks more the part of a basketball star than a soccer standout.

"A lot of players are intimidated by my height," Tomecka said. "It's especially beneficial with my heading ability. It's easier to head."

Tomecka might be dominating smaller players and helping to lead the defense now, but at the beginning of the season, she was one who felt intimidated.

"At first it was hard, because I had so much respect for the other players," Tomecka said. "But now we've all gotten used to each other. They understand that when I tell them to do something, it's what I think, and they don't have to do it."

Tomecka worked hard to earn her position on the field. Sophomore Leslie Gaston started at defensive midfielder for the first 12 games of the season, with Tomecka coming off the bench.

But Tomecka practiced diligently, and it paid off.

Tomecka took over the position in the starting lineup for the last four games that the Tar Heels have played — three of which were in the ACC tournament.

She is one of two freshmen that start for the Tar Heels, along with forward Alyssa Ramsey, and is expected to be in the starting lineup when UNC plays a second round NCAA tournament game tomorrow against Wake Forest.

All-ACC Freshman team honors, three goals and eight assists have earned Tomecka her teammates' respect.

"Her presence is great for us," junior



Maggie Tomecka

midfielder Jena Kluegel said. "As a freshman, she's playing really well. She's winning balls in the middle of the field for us, she's dominating people in the air, and that's what we need."

A defensive presence and the ability to head are the raw skills Tomecka had when she started her career as a Tar Heel. But since she's been at UNC, Tomecka said she has learned the value of anticipation.

"That is what took me a while to learn when I first got here," Tomecka said. "To anticipate where the ball is going to go, to read the game. Experience and practice has helped

me with that."

While Tomecka perfects reading the ball, Dorrance is anticipating great things from the blossoming freshman.

"Maggie is a bundle of potential," Dorrance said. "Even though you don't use this statement as often as you would in basketball, a person that takes up that much room in the penalty box, you have to deal with."

Despite all the talk about how big Tomecka's been so far this season, there is nothing big about her ego.

"You can't let anything get to your head," Tomecka said. "You have to play well every day."

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