

The dunes chronicle

At a few minutes past nine on a cool August morning, two vans pull away from McArthur Court. "I think," head volleyball coach Chris Voelz tells two journalists, "you'll like this."

"This" is The Trip, the debut of the Oregon volleyball team's fall camp. Their destination is Honeyman State Park at Florence for a full day of work outs on windy Oregon sand dunes. It is, for the newcomers, the first real introduction to what Voelz calls the "Flying, Diving, Ducks 1982." For the veterans of the team, it is what they've experienced before, a strenuous eight hours of interval training.

The vans head out of Eugene, down Highway 126, through small towns like Mapleton and Noti. The mood aboard Voelz' van, an assemblage of rookies and one red-shirted senior, Cathy Hill (see

be expecting a confirmation from someone, anyone. None is forthcoming.

Tambe is one of several blue-chippers Voelz nabbed. The head coach isn't hesitant to discuss the newcomers, their talents or her recruiting methods. The van ambles west as Voelz starts to list the freshman she recruited from Oregon and southern California.

"Steph," says Voelz, pointing to Tambe and explaining her origins, "is a scrambler." Voelz rattles off a few more names, Connie Riel, Jill Koscinski, Shaunna Koenig — all blue chippers, all from south of the Bay Area. "They've all played in the junior nationals together, they're all so confident," Voelz says with a knowing smile.

Voelz explains her recruiting methods as honest and upfront. "I don't want a player who can't work within this system," she says.

Voelz also tries to recruit heavily in Oregon, but, for reasons Voelz says she can't explain, Oregon State University seems to have the best luck with the Oregonians. Voelz has turned, not unwillingly, to other areas, namely southern California, the nation's volleyball hotbed.

That area has dealt Oregon all of its freshmen — some of them Voelz' will use as her ace in the hole. In addition, over half of the Ducks on the 1982 roster are native southern Californians.

When she came to Oregon, Voelz says, a lot of recruiting was done farther east, out toward Colorado, which Voelz says was too expensive for the number of players she could recruit from that area. "We recruit mainly from the west coast," Voelz says.

As the vans cruise through yet another one-

horse town, Voelz switches topics — to the rest of her players, and to the assistant coaches.

Both assistants have extensive volleyball backgrounds and a lot of similarities. Both are Oregonians, out of the Portland metropolitan area. Both played against each other in the state prep championship, four years ago. Christie McFarlane, a hitter and anchor of the Wilson High team, went on to school at the University. Anna Maria Lopez, the anchor of just about everything athletic at St. Mary's Academy, went to the University of Southern California. There is another similarity, both coaches have Voelz' unabashed approval.

McFarlane is one of the first four-year products of the Voelz method. She comes into Oregon's program with a complete knowledge of the philosophy and methods.

Lopez was an All-American at 'SC and traveled with the US national team.

As a coach, Lopez is still integrating herself into the Oregon system, something she and Voelz expect to happen quickly.

The players that Voelz talks about first are Hill, the redshirted senior. And academic sophomore: volley ball freshman Sue Harbour. The two roommates would have been The Ducks for Voelz this year.

Knee injuries felled Hill, who will red shirt this year. Harbour, who spent last year as a redshirt because of injuries is ready to go, something Voelz is counting on.

"We're going to ask a lot of her," Voelz says of Harbour. "She's going to have a lot of pressure."

Because of injuries, the Voelz attack will turn from a skying, net game to a hustling, scrambling, hell-bent for volleyball-leather plan. "Our goal is to never let the ball hit the floor," Voelz says.

Among the other goals Voelz hopes the team will aspire to and which the team will set, is to end up "around fourth" in the newly formed NCAA Nor-Pac league.

With the likes of the University of Washington, San Jose State and Fresno State in the same league, Voelz says the goal for the young Duck

The Oregon volleyball team, running silhouetted against the sand dunes, warms up for a practice session.

squad (only five upperclassmen are on the roster), is realistic and a building block for the future.

Youth is something Voelz is happy with, but some healthy upperclassmen would have eased the transition. To date, of all the veterans not injured, only Anetta Ensworth has ever played in a major college game.

However, Voelz says the youngsters will be "fighters," and intimidation won't work against them. "They have friends going to school at USC," Voelz says. "They've played against them, they're not going to be intimidated."

Voelz says a lot of the reason for the abundance of youth at Oregon is that players haven't typically stuck with four years of volleyball. Especially when Voelz first took the reins at Oregon. Voelz says a number of the players weren't willing to put out the effort that it took to win.



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The coach recalls the first day at the sand dunes, during the first year of Voelz volleyball at Oregon. "We took about 40 — 45 players up there, and by noon, half dropped out," Voelz says.

As Voelz talks about the first year's ship jumping, the volleyball team hits the junction that will lead them into Florence. Driving through the town, comments about the weather and the chance of rain involve the whole population of the van.

"Our Lady of the Dunes Church," says Tambe as the van passes a small church, "jeez, Continued on page 18

Stories by Debbie Howlett

Photos by Mark Pynes

Cathy Hill's shirt changes from green to red this year

Cathy Hill works through technique drills with the Oregon volleyball team. While her teammates do "pre-steps," a prelude to executing a pass, their knees bend past 90 degrees to accommodate a low ball. Hill's knees won't break a 15 degree plane.

As a senior, a two-year letter winner and an All-American candidate, the volleyball team was looking to Hill as its stalwart. Coach Chris Voelz anticipated Hill as the anchor of the "Flying, Diving, Ducks 1982."

Hill will have to wait another year to be the on-court anchor. Problems with both knees and subsequent surgery have forced the steady Duck to red shirt 1982 and pin her hopes on 1983.

Hill says the problems with her knees began her freshman year, with her left knee. Gradually, the right knee became tender too. During her junior year, Hill says the pain worsened.

"It was painful, yeah — but you have to learn to play with pain," Hill says during a recent summer workout.

As the seasons progressed so did the pain in the 21 year-old's knees. "It definitely affected me," Hill says. "It was making me slower, less explosive. Then I decided to see a doctor."

Hill also saw a doctor the day of the interview. She says he told her it would be at least three to four weeks before she saw any action.

"I've never had this surgery before, I don't know how fast I'll progress," Hill says.

When asked if she would rather play this year or redshirt, Hill hesitates. "Right now I don't, my knees are real sore . . ."

"With the way my legs are right now," Hill adds with resignation, "I'd rather redshirt." And Voelz agrees.

"We'll redshirt her. She'd probably only make the last few weeks. That's not how we want her to spend her senior year," Voelz says.

Hill came out of Dallas High School in Dallas, Oregon to Oregon State University in 1979. She expected to play basketball and volleyball as a

scholarship athlete. After fall term in Corvallis, Hill transferred to the University, a decision she doesn't regret.

"I came here because of my love for (volleyball). I like basketball but I wasn't willing to work that hard at it," Hill says. "And I wanted to play at Oregon."

Hill's year as a redshirt won't be a complete loss to the team. Hill still wants to be the leader she and the rest of the team have come to expect. She views her leadership for the Ducks in two



Cathy Hill, an all-America candidate, will spend this year on the sidelines.

ways. During matches, she says it will be exerted in a supportive role. During practice, Hill says her leadership role will be what it has been before — as an example.

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