

University of California at Eugene?

UO imports Cal recruits

When Chris Voelz went on the recruiting trail last year, she must have had the Beach Boys song "California Girls" on her mind.

Voelz came away with five highly rated Southern Californians — Liz Eakin, Shaunna Koenig, Jill Koscinski, Connie Riel and Stephanie Tambe — who are expected to raise the fortunes of Oregon volleyball.

So what's the big deal about recruits from California? Well, California is the volleyball hotbed of the United States. Don't even bother arguing—there's no doubt about it. Volleyball is played in a lot of places, but in California, it's a religion.

Great, but what are these girls doing here? "This was one of the few schools that even knew what sports medicine was," says Koscinski, a P.E. major who serves as the comedienne of the group, "and it's pretty here."

"I liked everything about the area," says Eakin, an honors college student. Mostly, though, all five agree that they wanted to get away from Los Angeles, where they all went to high school within an hour of each other.

The recruiting tactics of Voelz didn't hurt either. "She was a very impressive recruiter," says Koenig, recruited for her quickness. "She had a way with words," adds Riel, a 6-0 hitter-setter.

It is interesting to note that most of the girls didn't know they were all attending the same school. "We were really surprised," says Koscinski. "Connie and I knew, and then Shaunna walked into the gym one day and said, 'Hi Ducks.'



Super frosh clown around off court, but once on, exhibit a picture of determination. Above, front row; Shaunna Koenig, Liz Eakin. Back row; Connie Riel, Stephanie Tambe and Jill Koscinski. Lower left,

Riel blocks a spike against the University of Washington. Lower right, Tambe grimaces after smashing a spike of her own.

Then Stephanie and Liz came too."

They're a very close group — "like a family," says Eakin. They're a very confident group as well. And why not? Between them, they've accumulated nearly every high school volleyball honor possible. In addition, all of them played for the prestigious South Bay Volleyball Club, which won a national championship two years ago and is coached by Pat Zartman, coach of the 1964

women's national team.

Furthermore, three of them start for Voelz. Tambe, a 5-5 sparkplug with great leaping ability, says, "As a freshman, you normally don't start, but all of us are." (Actually, only Koenig, Riel and Tambe are starters.)

Koenig said she even bet a friend that Oregon would be in the top 20 by her junior year.

Still, it's a young group. Besides Koscinski, who is redshirting this year, all the girls have been victims of rollercoaster-type play. They have led the Ducks as high as a win over 18th-ranked Utah State and as low as a disappointing loss to unheralded Fresno State.

Obviously, the adjustment from high school to college has taken its toll. Academically, "it's a pain," says Tambe, "but it won't be that bad after this term." Koenig, who replies "Help!" when asked about her major, says, "It's hard to study when you have volleyball on your mind."

It's also hard to have a social life. Koscinski says, "It's hard to meet people when you are always playing volleyball — why don't you put our phone numbers in the article?" she laughed.

"It's getting better. We're meeting a couple of people here, a couple there," chimes in Riel.

The girls have even had trouble getting used to the state of Oregon. "People from out of California can't relate to us,"

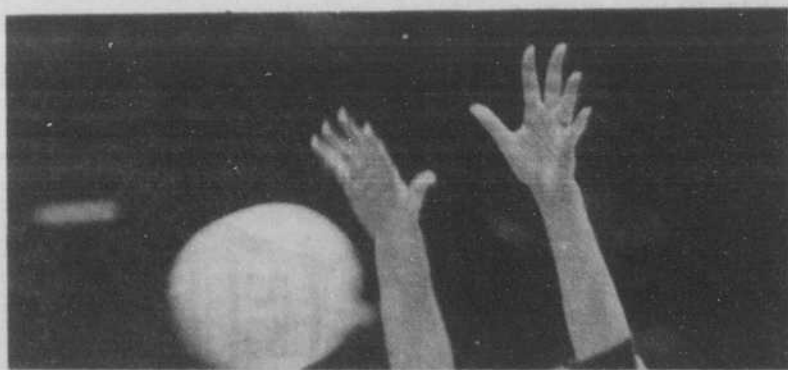
says Riel. "I've never seen so many bellbottoms," says Koscinski. And from Koenig, "I thought the people would be really friendly. I mean, they are, but I thought people would be running up and saying 'Hi!'. I guess I overestimated."

Despite their problems adjusting, these five girls give Voelz all the tools for great teams in the future. Koscinski is a great blocker, Riel a hitter who can double as a setter, Eakin a "real thinker" and Tambe a defensive specialist "who can crack the ball as hard as anyone." Koenig? Voelz calls her "the quickest athlete we have"

and "fun to watch."

Along with sophomore Ronda Dalthorp, a powerful hitter who rounds out Voelz' "California Connection", freshman Sue Harbour ("our best recruit ever," says Voelz), and senior redshirt Cathy Hill, an All-America possibility, the five have Oregon backers licking their chops for 1983.

Overall, the girls are excited about being at Oregon. "The year has just started, but I think I'm going to like it here," says Tambe. Eakin says, "I know I sound so positive, but I don't think I could have picked a better place to go."



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