

Tobbagi

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loose ball, Tobbagi slid into a row of advertisements and suffered a concussion in the second match of the season. She missed three matches as a result of the concussion.

"While it was unfortunate that she had a concussion, I think it knocked some sense into her to forget about her leg," Ferreira said. "So it was kind of good that she got her head banged up."

Tobbagi said her aggressive style began in high school, where she led Archbishop Mitty High to the California state championship match, (which she calls "a touchy subject" because her team came out on the wrong end).

"It used to be a lot easier," Tobbagi said of her attacks. "I don't ever remember getting blocked in high school."

When she came in as a fresh face to the Oregon volleyball program in 1998, Tobbagi quickly learned she had to make some changes to adjust to the Pac-10 level. She was third on the team in kills her first year, but hit just .133 from the floor.

Not only does Tobbagi bring the heat to her opponents, but she brings an enthusiasm to the Ducks as one of the team leaders.

"I'm more of a lead-by-example type of person," she said. "I'm not a big cheerer, and I don't yell a lot. I'm just trying to put the ball away and help motivate everyone else."

Ferreira described Tobbagi as one of the "dominant leaders" on the team.

"She does not have a bad day," he said. "She is the offensive stimulant that carries this team. She is a special talent... and has the potential to be one of the best outside hitters in the conference."

Personal motivation is not a problem for Tobbagi, who is only looking to get even better and lead her young team to much greater heights.

"I like to see myself up there with the Logan Thoms [Stanford] and Kristee Porters [UCLA]," she said. "I know I can compete up to their level. I have the potential to do that. Next year, I want to be an All-American. I know I have it in me. I just have to continue to work hard."

Monique Tobbagi



Year: Junior

Position: Outside hitter

Home town: San Jose, California

2000: After sustaining a concussion in the second match of the season, Tobbagi has come back to lead the team in kills and is second in digs. Her 27 kills versus California are a career-high. She has seven double-doubles and a total of 16 service aces. In Oregon's first Pac-10 win of the season at Oregon State, the 6-foot Tobbagi tallied 17 kills, nine digs and posted a .368 attack percentage.

1999: Despite a leg injury that limited her playing time, Tobbagi led the team in kills average (3.68) and digs average (2.81). She also led the team with 27 service aces, averaging 0.47 per match. Had 13 matches in which she recorded 10-plus kills and seven matches with 10-plus digs. Surpassed her previous career-high in digs with 24 in the first match of the season against Boston College. Had seven double-doubles, including a 20-kill, 15-dig performance against Washington. In her next to last match of the season, tallied 15 kills, 19 digs and one service ace against California. Was named the squad's most valuable player.

Pacific-10 Conference Volleyball Standings

USC	10-1 Pac-10	16-1 overall
Arizona	10-1	17-2
UCLA	9-2	14-5
Arizona State	6-5	14-7
Oregon State	5-5	15-7
Stanford	5-6	11-8
California	4-7	9-9
Washington State	3-8	12-8
OREGON	1-9	9-10

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Monique Tobbagi
junior outside hitter

It was evident in her freshman season, though, that Tobbagi was going to be a key component of the Ducks future.

"Monique is the future of our program," former head coach Cathy Nelson said two years ago. "She is one of the best freshmen in the conference. I think she will be a leader for us next year, both on and off the court."

Her inconsistencies were apparent during her first two years as a Duck, but Tobbagi has shown that she can make significant improvements.

"I used to just hit the ball as hard as I could, and I made a lot of mistakes that way," she said. "I used to dwell a lot on my mistakes. One of the biggest things Carl has taught me is that I can't dwell."

Now Tobbagi is a more intelligent volleyball player who knows when to go all out.

"She's really elevated her tactical side of the game," Ferreira said. "Against Oregon State, the great thing was that when the opportunities weren't there, she didn't beat herself by making any unforced errors. But when the opportunity was there, she was very explosive."

Ferreira said he has even seen the development throughout this year. On the season, Tobbagi's attack percentage is a modest .207, but in the last five matches, she has averaged a .304 clip.

"It's like the difference between a thrower and a pitcher," Ferreira said. "[Hall of Fame major league baseball pitcher] Nolan Ryan was a thrower early on in his career. Then he became a better overall pitcher. The same thing applies to Monique. She understands what it means to be a tactical hitter now."

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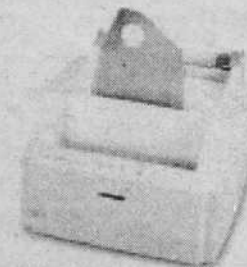
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