

Michelle McKinney

Home town girl ready for big time game

JOHN THORBURN
Sports Editor

Michelle McKinney is no ordinary student.

The 1995 Oregon City graduate has much to boast about.

A national championship in high school.

All-league honors in basketball and volleyball her junior and senior years.



Michelle McKinney

"Michelle is one of the hardest working athletes that has come through this school ... She's a tough player to keep down."

Kathie Woods
Volleyball Coach

A full scholarship to a Division I-A four-year university in California.

A key player in the Clackamas women's basketball team's run for a league championship two years ago.

An honorable mention award her freshman year on a volleyball team that won the Southern Region title.

Second-team All-Southern Region honors last winter on a regional championship basketball squad.

First-team All-Southern Region honors this fall on a regional championship volleyball team.

Surprisingly, none of this matters to the 6'1" athlete.

The most important thing in Michelle's life is raising her three-year old son, Dakota.

The single mother, who has competed for Clackamas as a basketball player in the winters of 1997 and 1998 and as a volleyball player in the fall of 1997 and this past fall, is moving on from life as a Cougar, along with young Dakota, to bigger and brighter things.

She has no set plans on where she will play next year, but

Michelle already has plans for her son.

"I really want to get him into sports," noted McKinney. "We're thinking of starting him in gymnastics and dancing. He's definitely not going to play football because I don't want him to get hurt. He can play basketball and soccer and baseball, though. He's awesome at baseball. I took him to the doctor and she said that he is very advanced for his age."

Clackamas Volleyball Head Coach Kathie Woods is very proud of McKinney both on and off the court.

"Michelle is an awesome person," said Woods. "She is one of those players that, as a coach, you never have problems with. She works very hard at making herself a better player."

"Michelle is a sweetheart. She has a very gentle spirit and I'd love to watch her grow and mature. She's a loving mom and that's helped her growing up."

McKinney was on her way to an illustrious college basketball career when she accepted a full basketball scholarship to San Jose State University her senior year at OCHS.

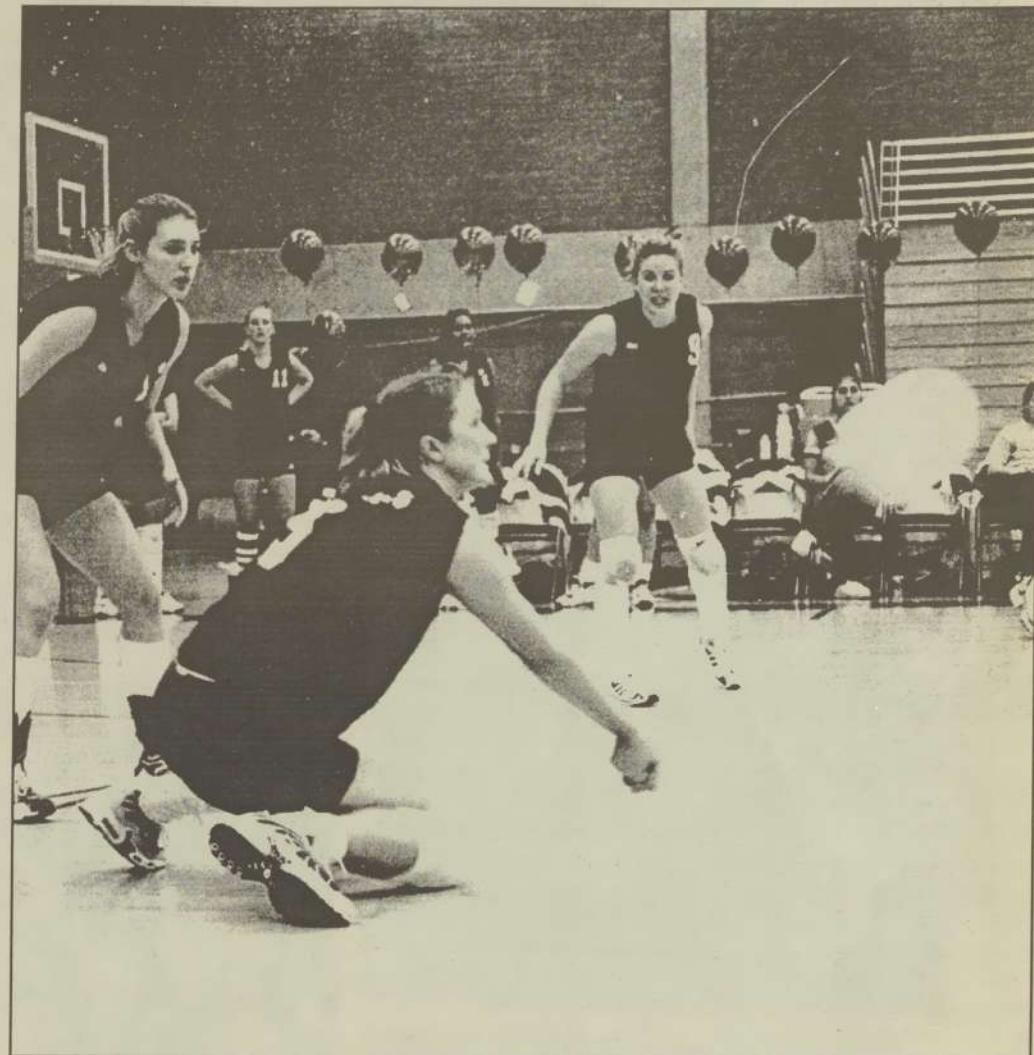
After Dakota was born the September following McKinney's graduation, she decided to take a year off from school.

When she decided to return, she felt it best to start smaller at Clackamas instead of going to southern California.

"My first year at Clackamas," noted McKinney, "I didn't have the best attitude. I was planning on going to a big school so it took a little time to adjust to a small college. But since then it has been the best experience for me. This past year has been great."

While McKinney attended Clackamas, San Jose State continued to honor their commitment through her freshman year.

"I ended up signing with them twice," added McKinney. "Once in high school and then again at Clackamas. After my first year at Clackamas I was thinking of leaving for San Jose State but I



Sophomore Michelle McKinney goes low for the ball en route to one of her 100 digs this season. McKinney, who closed out her Clackamas basketball career last Spring, plays her last matches as a Cougar this weekend at the NWAACC Championships in Walla Walla, Wa. Photo courtesy of Doug Higgins.

decided to stay. I feel I made the right choice."

As a basketball player, Michelle was part of two incredible teams that won the Southern Region title once and made it to the league championship game.

Clackamas Head Coach Jim Martineau knows what McKinney meant to the Clackamas basketball program.

"Without Michelle," noted Martineau, "we wouldn't have won the Southern Region title and we wouldn't have made it to the NWAACC Championship. It's as simple as that."

When asked how she impacted the volleyball program, Coach Woods spoke highly of McKinney.

"Michelle has brought a lot of athleticism and dedication to the program," said Woods. "She is a mature competitor. Her aggressiveness and competitiveness means a lot to this program."

While McKinney competed as an athlete, she has been working toward a transfer degree in Criminal Justice. Being a full-time student as well as a two-sport athlete, she has needed help raising Dakota.

"My parents have been really great," said McKinney. "My mom watches Dakota while I'm at school and that has helped me out a lot. I'm very grateful."

"I have plans to move out after volleyball is over so Dakota will probably need to go to daycare while I'm at school. I'm a little scared about that but I'll

only be taking classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

When Clackamas competes in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges [NWAACC] championships this weekend, McKinney will close her final chapter as a Clackamas athlete.

According to all of her coaches, McKinney has many open doors in continuing her career as either a basketball or a volleyball player.

"After the season is over, Michelle and I are going to sit down and really target some schools for her to go to," she said.

McKinney is excited to continue her athletic career but is weary of where she will attend.

"I really have no idea right now," said McKinney. "I know some schools have been interested in me but I haven't been in contact with any schools yet. I'm going to look at the schools that will be best for me as well as Dakota."

Wherever she ends up, McKinney is bound to make an impact.

"Michelle is one of the hardest working athletes that has come through this school," said Woods. "Even when she's injured, she still wants to go and play. She's a tough player to keep down. That's true in volleyball and in life."

Michelle McKinney, a member of the Oregon City National Championship basketball team in 1995, was a standout on the court as she received Second-Team All-Southern Region honors last March.



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Classifieds

For Sale: '87 Red VW Jetta, tinted windows. NEW clutch, flywheel, transmission, alternator and battery. 177K miles. \$4000 OBO. Leave message @ 271-0615.

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For Sale: 4-wheeler Banshee, 4-wheeler Quad, Camper. \$3500 for Banshee, call for details. Don, 788-0039.

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Roommates: Interested in two roommates in January? Call 271-0615.