

Athlete of the Week

Eli Medina

Sport: Volleyball
Year: Freshman
Position: Outside Hitter
Hometown: Kansas City, Mo.



Medina had three double-doubles in her first four collegiate matches at the Minnesota-Duluth Tournament in Duluth, Minn. She has played in every game and is second on the team with 27 digs and fourth with 44 kills.

Medina smashes ranked opponents

Joseph Barker
Staff Reporter

It must be the jersey. Freshman Eli Medina is wearing the jersey in question, No. 9: a jersey previously worn by All-American and 2004-05 Index Player of the Year alumna Jessica Sears that now belongs to Medina. And the honors keep coming to the jersey.

Medina is the Index Athlete of the Week for her help in leading the volleyball team to a 4-0 start.

"I picked the No. 9, and people will probably think that it is because of Jessica Sears, who is amazing, but it's not," Medina said. "It has been my number since grade school, and it's kind of my lucky number."

As the lone freshman starter, Medina has contributed right away. Playing against four teams ranked in the top 11 in the country, Medina had three double-doubles, or 10 or more kills and 10 or more digs in a game in her first four matches.

This is something the previous jersey number didn't do in her first four college matches.

"I never expected to be a starter this early," Medina said. "I knew I had to work hard and prove myself, but it was still unexpected."

Her numbers in the young season stack up well against several well-known Bulldogs.

Her 2.44 kills and 3.17 digs per game are very close to junior Sarah Sherman, the 2003 National Freshman of the Year.

Sherman averaged 3.25 kills and 3.5 digs per game in her first four matches.

As good as her numbers look thus far, head coach Jason Skoch thinks she only can improve on them.

"She did great with those numbers, with also having some poor choices," Skoch said. "She can just get smarter with that. And so I think she will be able to produce those numbers much easier. I can see her producing those numbers all year."

Medina is not someone who has a noticeable strength. Skoch said she is very well-rounded.

"Eli brings a ton of ball control and a lot of game saviness, and her defense is unreal," Skoch said. "She really knows what she's doing out there."

Winning individual awards is not all Medina wants this year. She has big plans for the team.

"I would like to keep improving every day as a player," Medina said. "And I think that the team is so great that we definitely are capable of winning first place this year as long as we work as hard as we have been."

Skoch said Medina has the mind for the game.

"She is very coachable," Skoch said. "When she messes up I can tell her what's going on, and she'll understand."

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Eli Medina
freshman outside hitter



Chris Waller/Index
Freshman Eli Medina does a drill during Tuesday's practice. Only a freshman, Medina is already starting for the defending nation runners-up.

Cubs fans celebrate little things

So, I've finally realized something. The Cubs probably won't make the playoffs this year.

We're in fourth place in the division, 21 games behind the division leaders the Cardinals (sigh) and eight games behind the wild card leaders, the Philadelphia Phillies. With five other teams ahead of us, it looks pretty grim for us bleacher bums.

OK, so we definitely won't make the playoffs this year.

But we North-Siders, we're an extremely proud race. Take our motto "wait 'til next year." We're just full of optimism.

As a result, Cubs fans always can find a positive to the negative.

I mean, c'mon, we haven't won a World Series in almost 100 years.

In fact, the last time we were actually THERE, my dad was just being born. We have to have some sort of cognitive dissonance.

My cognitive dissonance for this year is a tie between two very momentous events.

For one, Ryne Sandberg finally got voted into Cooperstown. So he hasn't waited to be inducted as long as a lot of other Hall of Famers, but for Cubs fans, waiting to see the bronze plaque of good ol' Ryno seemed like we were waiting for eternity - don't even get me started with Santo.

You think we'd be used to a lot of waiting, but we're not.

Equally important is that the Cubs totally dominated the Cards this season. Yeah, they have a better record than us. So what?

We're 6-3 against them. Most Cubs fans would rather see the Cubs destroy St. Louis than go to the playoffs.

We'll get our hopes high, only to have them painfully crushed by some freak accident.

This way, we don't have to worry about our dreams being shattered, thus giving us the opportunity to focus on the more important things in life ... like beating the Cardinals into oblivion.

Or maybe I'm just saying that because I'm really jealous that even the Diamondbacks have been there.

I hate contradicting myself.

Commentary



Ross Houston

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