

Finals

Flashbacks



1976

The sport of volleyball was invented in 1895 at Springfield College in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Added to the Olympics in 1964, the international amateur athletic event exposed the power game to a broad audience. In the winter of 1976, the MHSAA added volleyball to the array of championships sponsored by the organization.

A total of 458 teams comprised of girls – and some boys – participated in the first volleyball tournament. Broken into three classifications, Class A contests were played on the campus of Schoolcraft College in Livonia, while Class B games were held at Read Field House at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Bay City's Delta College played host to the Class C-D tournament. Eight teams qualified for the

finals in each classification. Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final matches were played on the same day, made possible because games were timed during that first year.

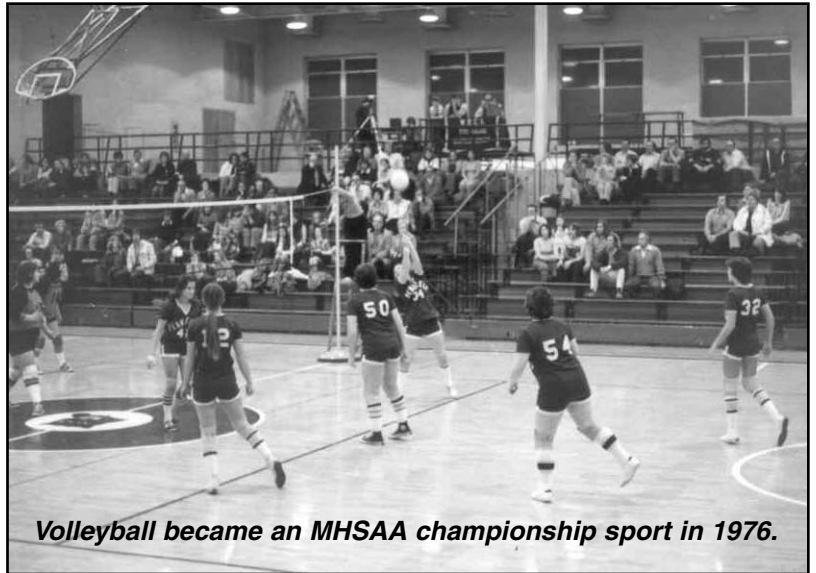
Dearborn Fordson won a non-MHSAA tournament in 1975. Led by tri-captains Lynn March, June Scott and Joan Ferguson, the Tractors earned the MHSAA's first Class A title by disposing of Grosse Pointe North (which included two boys in the lineup) in the Semifinals, 15-6, 15-4. Fordson then knocked off previously unbeaten Ferndale in the Final, 15-13, 15-5 for the crown.

Parchment carried a nine-player roster, including five seniors, into the first Class B tournament. The Panthers thumped Sturgis, 15-0, 15-8 in the Semifinals, then downed Tecumseh, 15-8, 15-11, to finish the year with a 30-3 record.

Undefeated Flint Holy Rosary, led by Coach Jo Lake, rolled to the 1976 Class C-D crown with a 14-5, 13-8 win over Kalamazoo Christian in the Final. The team

snagged the Class D title the following year as well, establishing a winning streak of 92 games straight.

All three first-year champions were honored with the MHSAA's inaugural "Legends of the Game" ceremony in 1998.



Volleyball became an MHSAA championship sport in 1976.

MHSAA Files

1981

The tournament took up residence in Battle Creek, with Class A and D games played at Battle Creek Central High School's Field House, while Class C and D title matches were held at Battle Creek Pennfield High School.

Returning to the title game for the second straight year, Wayne Memorial survived a tenacious battle with East Kentwood, 15-11, 16-14, 15-9 in the Semifinal round to advance. Squaring off against Fraser, a team they had beaten during the regular season, Coach Doris Busuito's Zebras again emerged as victors, this time 15-10, 15-11, to earn their first Class A title.

In Class B, Stevensville Lakeshore grabbed its first title in any sport with a 15-7, 15-7 triumph over Warren Woods in match play.

To the delight of hometown fans, Battle Creek Pennfield became the first school in tournament history to win volleyball titles in two different classes as the Panthers defeated Burton Atherton, 13-15, 15-2, 15-3 in Class C. Pennfield had finished as Class B titlist in 1979. For coach Vicky LaRouech, the win marked the second crown on the school year, as her basketball team scored the MHSAA's girls basketball Class C championship in December. Outstanding play by seniors Angie Glenn and Julie Wogomon helped the Panthers escape a tough battle with two-time defend-

ing champion Berrien Springs in the Semifinals. Both players were members of the championship basketball team and both the 1979 volleyball team.

In the tourney's major surprise, Saranac's strong offensive attack gave the Redskins a 15-8, 1-15, 15-5 win over perennial powerhouse Leland. The defending Class D champions, Leland had reached the Final in each of the four previous years and possessed a sterling 111-7 record entering the title match. The Comets won a championship in 1979.

Brimley, under head coach Charles Compo, won the first of five successive Upper Peninsula Open Class titles with a 15-3, 15-10 victory over Watersmeet.

1986 At East Kentwood, Portage

Northern defeated Redford Bishop Borgess in straight sets, 15-3, 15-12 to become the first MHSAA Class A school to successfully defend its crown. The Huskies, who had downed Flint Kearsley in the Semifinals, 15-0, 15-12, in a rematch of the 1986 title game, ended the year with a 71-2 mark. The contest closed out the prep careers of some of the state's top talent, led by Northern's Sue Nord.

Comstock battled back from early deficits in both games to pick up its first-ever MHSAA title with a 15-9, 15-10 triumph over top-ranked Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central at Delton Kellogg High School. Led by Kathy Jackson, Sabrina Blanks, Sherry Anderson and rock-solid defense, the Colts negated a 5-1 lead by Forest Hills in game two by rattling off 11 of the next 12 points. Sophomore Pam Davan scored the game-winner off an Anderson set to seal the title. It was the first of seven Class B championships won by Coach Jeff Borr, then in his first year.

In Class C play at Delton Kellogg, new head coach Jeff Zimmerman directed Berrien Springs to its third straight crown, 11-15, 15-10, 15-9. It was the sixth title

overall for the Shamrocks.

Led by its lone senior, Kathy Snow, Concord won the first of two consecutive Class D titles with a 15-9, 15-9 sweep of Leland. Concord's titlists were honored with MHSAA "Legends of the Game" honor at the volleyball Finals in 2002.

At Escanaba, Sault Ste. Marie bounced back from defeat in the opening game of the Upper Peninsula Open championship to defeat DeTour, 9-15, 15-10, 15-11. The Blue Devils upset five-time defending title holder Brimley in the regional round action to advance. Kathy Bennin led the Soo with 20 spikes, eight kills and two aces. Lisa Ames added eight kills.

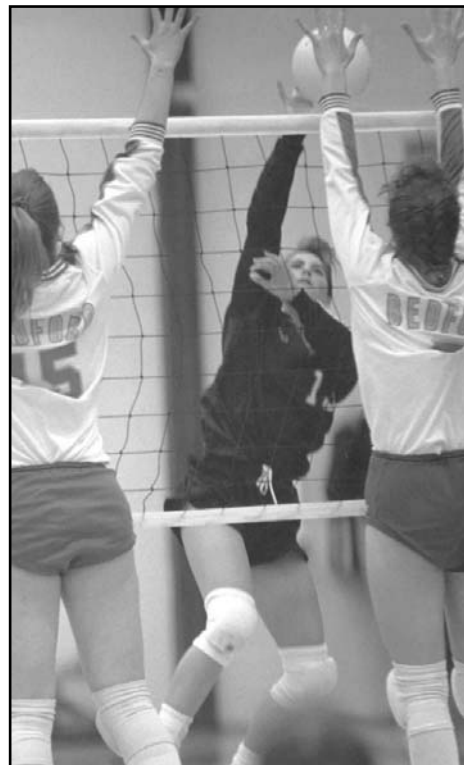
1991 Proving lack of height was not a barrier,

Livonia Churchill used teamwork and defense to grab the Class A title. Possessing a starting lineup all standing no taller than 5-9, Churchill relied on the serve, the pass and the dig to knock off Temperance Bedford, 15-13, 15-7. Christina Garry paced the victors with 16 kills followed by Alyssa Belaire with 14 kills. Kalamazoo Central High School hosted the tournament's final rounds of play for the Lower Peninsula.

Led by seniors Stacy Stanton, Mara Austrins and Jay Rayman, the Comstock Colts secured their third consecutive Lower Peninsula title and fifth crown in six seasons with a with a 16-14, 15-5 win over first-time finalist Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central.

Continuing a trend of winning the Class C crown in odd numbered years, Hanover-Horton pounded out 15-4, 15-2 wins over Buchanan to continue their "odd" streak. Under the guidance of Head Coach Karen Clark, the Comets first added hardware to the trophy case in 1987, winning in three games over Rogers City. Two year later, the team needed three contests to defeat Burton Bentley to earn the Class C title. Top-ranked throughout the '91 season,

Clark's squad required only two games and a total of 27 minutes to wrap up title number three. Juniors Aubrey Wilson and Laura Brockie each finished with six kills while the team compiled a stellar .613 hit percentage. The Comets ended the year with a 54-5 mark.



Gary Shook, Otsego

1991 – Churchill's Janine Sproul

Senior-dominated Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard knocked off a sophomore-loaded squad from Dryden to take the Class D title, 15-6, 15-13. It was the first-ever appearance in the championship game for the Irish. Always the bridesmaid, Dryden, had previously lost to Battle Creek St. Philip in the 1983 and 1984 title games. In 1991, the Cardinals managed to knock off St. Philip, the defending champs, in the semifinals before falling to Gabriel Richard. Charise Brigeer scored the game-winning ace for the Irish, who finished with a 37-4 record.

Ironwood topped off its Semifinal win over Kingsford with an 11-15, 15-0, 15-11 defeat of Newberry to earn the Upper Peninsula Class A-B-C title, played at Escanaba High School. The victories capped a sparkling 26-0 season for the Red Devils. Laura Newberry finished with 27 ace spikes on the day while Angie Jenko chipped in with 34 assists.

Brimley downed Cedarville 9-15, 15-12, 15-11 for the U.P. Class D title.

1996 Veteran Coach Phil Wilson and his Kalamazoo

Central Maroon Giants pulled off a win in their District championship showdown with Portage Central, the MHSAA Class A defending champs and a co-member of the Big Eight Conference. The Maroon Giants then rolled to their first MHSAA volleyball title with a win over Temperance-Bedford, 15-8, 15-13 at Western Michigan's



Gary Shook, Otsego

1996 – Hanover-Horton topples Montague in Class C

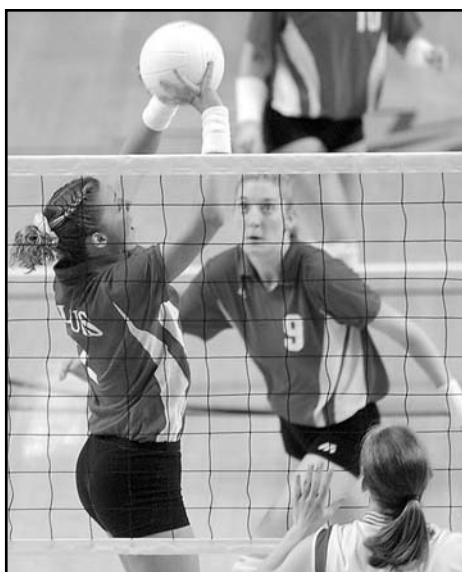
University Arena in Kalamazoo. The victories were sweet revenge for K-Central as regular-season losses to both squads represented the four defeats that had marred the team's record. The team was led by Wilson's daughter, Kristy, who finished with 16 kills. Teammate Paula Zemrowski added 13 kills, while Molly Holcomb delivered the winning point in the match's final game.

Top-ranked Comstock, unbeaten in six previous trips to the championship contest, struck gold again with a 15-0, 15-6 victory over Charlotte in Class B. The Colts, who last won Class B in 1993, defeated an up-and-coming Marysville squad in the Semifinals prior to overpowering the Orioles in the opening game. Trailing 6-4 in game two, Comstock rallied for 11 consecutive points and a return to the winner's circle.

In Class C, Horton-Hanover upended Montague, 15-8, 15-11, to earn its fourth title, and first under Coach Bill Abbott. Trailing 11-0 in the second game, the Comets stepped it up defensively and focused on tipping the ball to the side of the middle blocker, scoring points or sideouts. Casey Mattice finished with 11 kills, followed by Melinda Tripp with seven kills for the winners.

After knocking off four-time defending champ Battle Creek St. Philip in the Semifinals, 9-15, 15-11, 15-13, Adrian Lenawee Christian netted its first title with a win over Maple City Glen Lake, 15-9, 15-12. It was the second consecutive trip to the Class D Final for Glen Lake.

Rudyard tripped up Iron Mountain, 14-16, 15-12, 15-3 for the U.P. Class A-B-C crown at Escanaba High School.



20-20 Photographic

2001 – Jessica Komperda and Kristi Herrington (9) of St. Louis

Led by first-year Coach Stephanie Tuori, Cedarville sealed its fifth straight Class D title with a 15-3, 15-10 victory over Iron Mountain North Dickinson. Cedarville had previously earned eight consecutive trips to the title match under Head Coach Mark Engle. The veteran mentor was named coach at Lake Superior State in 1995 and stepped down from his post at Cedarville following the 1995 season. He finished with a 354-92 varsity record compiled at Holland West Ottawa and Cedarville.

2001

After dropping the opening contest to perennial power Portage Northern, Temperance Bedford battled back for a pair of thrilling victories to earn the Class A championship, 8-15, 16-4, 15-11, at University Arena on the campus of WMU. It was the second title for the Kicking Mules, who had advanced to at least the Semifinal round in each season since 1990.

The two teams combined for a whopping 128 kills in the three battles, led by Northern's Katie Bright who posted 29 points during the three-game match. Bright pounded out 11 kills in the opener to lead the undefeated Huskies to a 15-8 win. Bedford opened up a 13-8 lead in game two, but Northern's Kari Dykema served up six straight points to push Bedford to the brink of elimination, 14-13. Led by sophomore Jennifer Sulewski, the Mules stubbornly refused to fall. Following a timeout, Bedford regained service on a Selewski kill. An attack error followed by another Selewski kill gave the Mules a 15-14 advantage. After exchanging possessions, Selewski served up the game-winning point.

Riding the momentum, Temperance Bedford grabbed a quick 8-2 lead, then rolled to a 15-11 win and the title. The Mules finished the year with a 56-17 record, while Northern closed with an 82-1 mark. Linda Bankowski ended with 39 assists for the winners while teammate Missy Mohrbach had five blocks and 15 kills, including eight in the final game. Northern's Laura Bellinger established a championship match record with 49 assists.

Coach John Knuth's Marysville squad picked up its 60th win against a single defeat as the Vikings cruised to their fifth title in a row, 15-2, 15-9, over Fruitport. Kelly Thomas finished with 22 assists for the victors, as well as the deciding service ace in the final game. Holly Panches posted a game high 25 assists for Fruitport.

The triumph by the Vikings in the title match solidified the rivalry between the two schools. Fruitport had lost to Marysville in



20-20 Photographic

2001 – Mendon's Katrina Dubbeld

the 1989 Semifinals, but was responsible for the Vikings' only regular-season loss in 2001. The championship match would mark the first of three consecutive Class B title showdowns between the Vikings and the Trojans. In 2005, Fruitport ended Marysville's streak of eight consecutive championships with a victory in the Semifinals, then went on to win the Class B crown.

Senior Kristi Herrington had 14 kills and four blocks as St. Louis downed Suttons Bay, 15-13, 15-8, for its second Class C title in three years. Jessica Komperda added 25 assists.

Mendon topped Adrian Lenawee Christian in the Class D match, 15-6, 6-15, 15-12, for top honors. Katrina Dubbeld led the winners with 13 kills while Brandi Skzypek finished with 21 assists and 15 digs.

— Ron Pesch

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